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DISCOURSES
ON
THE LIFE OF CHRIST.

GLASGOW:

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DISCOURSES

ON

THE LIFE OF CHRIST,

OR,

THE PRINCIPAL EVENTS IN THE PERSONAL HISTORY
OF THE REDEEMER:

BY THE

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P R E F A C E.

THE following Series of Discourses was suggested by the Series of the Church's Festivals commemorative of Events relating to our Lord, including the Commemoration of His Temptation and Passion in the Season of Lent: among which have been inserted in their place a few other Events the notice of which, though not marked by the appointment of separate Festivals to commemorate them, was thought essential to the object proposed, inasmuch as they form connecting links in the chain of the Personal History of the Redeemer:—namely, His First Passover—His Baptism—His Declaration of His Mission as the Messiah—His Transfiguration—and the Forty Days' interval between His Resurrection and Ascension.

The Sermons will be recognized by those who desired their publication to be precisely the same as delivered; with the exception of the concluding practical applications, which in some will appear to be curtailed, having been occasionally extended beyond what had been actually written, as time permitted and circumstances seemed to require. As, however, it has been found that Persons *read* Sermons chiefly for Instruction, and *hear* them (as more befits the time and place) for Edification—by the impressing of known truths or exhorting to particular duties; it will not (it is hoped) be considered an objection to published Discourses that they should partake more of the *Expository* or *Doctrinal* Character than of the *Practical*: leaving the fuller and more detailed application of the Truths that may have been brought out or illustrated to be made (as it will not fail to be) by the reader who seeks DIVINE KNOWLEDGE—not to indulge an inquisitive mind or speculative imagination, but—for that purpose for which it has been given, as a means to increasing conformity to the DIVINE IMAGE.

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DISCOURSES

ON

THE LIFE OF CHRIST.

I.—HIS NATIVITY.

ST. JOHN I. 16.

“ And of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.”

THIS Passage is selected for our present meditation as comprehending in summary the blessings which are derived to us from the event this day commemorated by the Church—the Nativity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: as shown by its connexion with the announcement of the verse next but one preceding, the 14th,—“ And the WORD was made “flesh and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His “glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the “Father,) *full of grace* and truth, ... and “of His *fulness* have all we received, and *grace for “grace.*” That is, “THE WORD” who was spoken of in the preceding context (selected for the Gospel

of the Day), of whom it is stated, verse 1, that "He "was in the beginning with God and was God;" and verse 3, that "all things were made by Him, and "without Him was not any thing made that was "made,"—He "was made (or "begotten") flesh and "dwelt among us:" the Deity's-self embodied for blessing to man, and constituted, as it were, a fountain and well-spring of "grace" from which His redeemed draw and are filled: as also stated in a parallel passage, Coloss. ii. 9, 10,—"For in Him " (Christ) dwelleth all the *fulness*¹ of the Godhead "bodily: and ye are *complete*² (literally "*filled*") in Him." "And grace for grace"—"even grace answering to grace," as the words mean and may be rendered: that is, for each grace, or manifestation of grace, in Him, a corresponding gift of grace to us!—a fruitful theme, the detail of which it were impossible here to attempt: but which in outline may be comprised under three Heads—a threefold "grace" of which the "fulness" is in Christ and of which "we receive:"—and,

I. First,—In the Redeemer, Christ, is the fulness of "grace" in the sense of *mercy*, for the pardon and justification of fallen and guilty man: and this as "The Word made flesh."

¹ πληρωμα

² περιπληρωμένοι

Looking at salvation in its primary result—as deliverance from the condemnation due to sin and restoration to the Divine favour, it was needful in the wisdom of God that man should be “*justified*” in order to his being pardoned; that one should be found who, by his perfect obedience in man’s nature, might become entitled to recover his forfeited blessings and at the same time vindicate the Law which he had broken *by fulfilling all the conditions of humanity*: first “fulfilling all righteousness;” and then, as “the righteous One,” expiating the guilt of man’s sin by submitting to the sentence of death denounced against it: that, in the words of the Apostle, “as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the “righteousness of one the free gift might come upon all men unto justification of life” (Rom. v. 18.): and thus, as the same Apostle says (ib. iii. 25), God might “declare His righteousness for the remission” “(or “in the remitting) of sins that are past . . .” might be just and the justifier of him that believeth;” that is, of man standing in this New Head of life and receiving of Him.

But where was such an one to be found? One who could thus “lay-hold-on” the nature of man, fallen and sinking into perdition; and raise, restore, and justify it? This Day’s commemoration answers

the question. For *this end* "the Word was made flesh ;" as we learn from Phil. ii. 6—8, which thus expounds this mystery :—"Who, being in the form " of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with " God ; but made himself of no reputation, and took " upon him the form of a servant, and was made in " the likeness of men : and being found in fashion as " a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient " unto death, even the death of the cross : " and again, Heb. ii. 14—16, " Forasmuch then as the " children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also " himself likewise took part of the same ; that through " death he might destroy him that had the power of " death, that is, the devil ; and deliver them who " through fear of death were all their lifetime subject " to bondage. For verily he took not on him the " nature of angels ; but he took on him the seed of " Abraham : " or literally, with the margin, " He " taketh not hold of Angels, but of the seed of Abra- " ham He taketh hold ; " that is, as just said, to raise it up and save it.*

While, as none other could *recover* for man so none other could *sustain*—could secure to the nature so raised *stability*. For, man in his best estate had fallen : and Angels (as intimated in the last quoted

* *ἑωχλαμβάνηται*, 'To take by the hand,' and so 'To raise up, help, &c.'

passage) had fallen—proving that no creature has *in itself* consistency or goodness. But both are His who has taken the human nature into the Divine in Himself that He might both justify it and sustain it everlastingly : establishing an indefeasible Title for all who are willing to inherit through Him, and to receive “the gift by grace which is by one man, “Jesus Christ,” and which “hath abounded unto “many” as did the sin of one unto death ; (Rom. v. 15.)

II. But there is yet another and a richer “grace” than this of pardon and justification possessed in its “fulness” by Christ that we may “receive of it” —of which He is the fountain to those who believe in Him : namely, that to which, under this same emblem, He alluded in His memorable conversation with the woman of Samaria, chap. iv. of this gospel, when He said, “If thou knewest the gift of God and “who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink ; thou “wouldst have asked of him and he would have given “thee living water” (verse 10.): and again, pointing to Jacob’s well, verses 13, 14,—“Whosoever drinketh “of this water shall thirst again ; but whosoever “drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall “never thirst ; but the water that I shall give him “shall be in him a well of water *springing up into*

"*everlasting life*:" the import of which gracious gift we are not left to conjecture—that we have here, not merely (as sometimes said) an emblem of the peace which is the result of justification satisfying the craving of the conscience, but a still better thing, even,—as explained in another passage, chap. vii. 37—39, in connexion with the renewed promise of this same "living water" to all who are athirst and come to Him to drink,—*the gift of the Holy Spirit of God*:—"But this," adds the Evangelist, "spake He of the Spirit which they that believe "on Him should receive:" which dwells in Him "without measure" that we might receive of it in measure.

And, as from the fulness of the grace of righteousness in Christ we have *justification*, so out of the fulness of this grace in Him—the grace of the Holy Spirit—we receive *regeneration*, as stated ver. 11—13 of this chapter before us:—"He came unto His own and His own received Him not. But as many "as received him, to them gave He power to become "the sons of God, even to them that believe on His "name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will "of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God:" and this, observe, *as another result from, and another object of* THE INCARNATION, as is evident from the connexion with the verse next following (14)—"*and*

the Word was made flesh,"—("became" or "*was born*," the same word as in ver. 12)—"and dwelt among us full of grace and truth, . . . and of His fulness have all we received even grace answering to grace:"—a most important connexion too generally lost sight of owing to a teaching which represents the regenerating Spirit as 'the purchase of Christ for us,' instead of "the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" imparted and communicated—"the Spirit of Christ" making us "His," according to Rom. viii. 9, "Ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not *the Spirit of Christ* he is none of His:"—and, in union with Him, children of God, ib. ver. 14; "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God:"—and again, in the Epistle for the Sunday after Christmas, Gal. iv. 6, "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth *the Spirit of his Son* into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." Of which truth we have a further remarkable recognition in the Collect for this Festival which prays thus,—'Almighty God who hast given us Thy only-begotten Son to take our nature upon Him and *to be born* of a pure virgin; Grant that we, *being regenerate* and made Thy children by adoption and 'grace, may daily be renewed by Thy Holy Spirit:' that is, we '*being regenerated*' by the same Spirit by

which He was *generated* in our nature holy and without sin : His sonship, as respects His humanity, the source and ground of ours.*

And the fruit of this Spirit in us is "grace answering to grace" in Him out of whose fulness it is received. Is it "*love*"—the love of our fellow-Christians? It is the love of Christ for them imbibed and participated:—"as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." Is it *long-suffering* and *patience*? It is the forbearance and patience of Christ:—"forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you so also do ye." Is it *humility*? It is the humility of Christ; "Let this mind be in you that was also in Christ Jesus." Is it *holiness* in general? It is the holiness of Christ:—"For their sakes I sanctify myself that they also might be sanctified through the truth:"—the energy and acting out of the Spirit and life of Christ; as the Apostle says of himself—"I live,

* *Note.* An ancient collect for the Nativity (mentioned in 'Palmer's Origines Liturgicæ') says 'Præsta quæsumus, Omnipotens Deus, ut natus hodie Salvator mundi, sicut divinæ nobis generationis est auctor, ita et immortalitatis sit ipse largitor:—' Grant that the Saviour of the world born this day, as He is the author to us of a divine generation, so may be to us the bountiful Giver of Immortality.'

yet not I, but *Christ liveth in me:*" not only His life *given for us* but *imparted to us*, constituting an union mystical and spiritual, but not the less real and actual, with Him; and in Him with God!

III. Nor is this all. Wonderful as is this "grace"—surpassing human conception—surpassing our belief, were it not for the most sure testimony of the word of God—it is but the first-fruits, but the earnest of "grace" yet to be received out of the same "fulness"—"the grace," namely, "that is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ," (1 Pet. i. 13); that is "the glory," for glory is grace in its full manifestation. And "grace," here again, "answering to grace:" the glory of *Christ*—of "the Word made flesh," and another object of that Mystery—of the Incarnation: the glory of "The Head" participated by "the Body" and its members individually. As it is written—"When Christ who is *our life* shall appear, then shall ye also appear *with Him* in "glory." (Col. iii. 4.) "Who shall change our vile "body, that it may be fashioned *like unto His glorious "body*, according to the working whereby He is able "even to subdue all things unto Himself." (Phil. iii. 21.) "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit "WITH ME in MY throne, even as I also overcame,

"and am sat down with my Father in His throne." (Rev. iii. 21.) For He is "Head over all things to *the Church* which is His body—the **FULNESS** of Him "that **FILLETH** all in all;"* the Church as it were a vessel filled out of the fulness that is in Him, (Ephes. i. 22, 23.): which grace received, then shall be answered His prayer for His disciples—for all who should believe on Him—"That they all may "be one; as thou, Father, art in me and I in Thee "that they also may be one in us: that the world "may believe that Thou hast sent me. And the "Glory which Thou gavest me I have given them, "THAT THEY MAY BE ONE EVEN AS WE ARE ONE!" (John xvii. 21, 22).

Finally—There is a special force, an emphasis to be noted in the words "all we" in the Text: "of His "fulness have **ALL WE** received . . ." "We" to whom "the Word made flesh" has been thus revealed: "We" of this the Christian dispensation in contradistinction to that which preceded, as intimated in the words that follow:—"For the Law was "given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus "Christ." The Law was inconsistent with or stood in the way of this revelation of "grace" because, (to revert to the first result of that grace above consid-

* ὅ ἐ πλήρωμα . . . τοῦ πληρωμένου.

ered), it is to sinful man "the ministration of condemnation" and "of death" instead of "justification and Life:" while (as regards the second) the standing to which it admitted was at best that of servants, not sons; "the spirit of bondage to fear," "not the Spirit of adoption" which, we have seen, is "the Spirit of Christ" and the privilege which He confers. And it no less stood in the way of the revelation of "the Truth," because, as regards its ceremonial, it was a vail purposely for the time cast over it: in its sacrifices and priesthood witnessing indeed to grace, but only as "the shadow of good things to come." The *reality* is ours, as is also the *grace*, both having come with Him who is "The Way" to the Father, "The Truth," and "The Life." "THE GRACE OF GOD hath appeared"¹ . . . it has been embodied for manifestation. The vail is lifted up: "the darkness is past and the true LIGHT now shineth" — "the Light of the knowledge of the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

And this is the event we this day celebrate. With what feelings, then, should we keep this Feast! With what joy: with what gratitude: with what awe: while we think that we who were by nature "far off" should be brought near, so near! Not only pardoned and restored, but made one: our flesh

¹ 'Επιφάν.

the very sanctuary of Deity—the shrine in which “tabernacled¹ the Word,” the true Shechinah—“the GLORY as of the only begotten of the Father, “full of grace and truth.” May we realize these our great privileges. May we individually, receive out of His fulness, even grace for grace: and—

“Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding “abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be “glory in the Church by Christ Jesus, throughout “all ages, world without end.” Amen.

¹ ἐσκήνωσεν.

THE LIFE OF CHRIST.

II.—HIS CIRCUMCISION AND NAME.

LUKE ii. 21.

“And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, His name was called JESUS, which was so named of the Angel before He was conceived in the womb.”

HAVING recently commemorated the Nativity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Church this Day* commemorates the next event in order of His Life, namely, His CIRCUMCISION, observed on this day because the eighth inclusive from His Birth; which event should therefore form the subject of our present meditation, and not that commonly substituted for it—the accidental circumstance of the commencement on the same day of another year. I say accidental—because had the eighth day from the Nativity fallen on the last of the year just closed, or on the second or any other day of this month, *that*

* January 1st.

would have been the day prescribed to be observed: the Church taking no notice of 'New-Year's-day' as such, because it is the Civil year which it begins; while the Ecclesiastical or Christian Year (marked by the Church's Holy Seasons and Festivals) has begun some time before—dating from the commencement of the Season of Advent and ending with the commemoration of 'All-Saints;' as you will see by referring to 'The Order of the Collects, Epistles, and Gospels throughout the year' in the Prayer-Book, at the head of which is 'The First Sunday in Advent.'

Not that I would be understood to say that the national and joyful celebration of a Day of so universal interest as the First of a New Year should be deemed unsuitable, still less objectionable: but it becomes so when made to supersede the appointment of the church and the observance of a sacred Festival commemorative of an event so much more important to all, being (as we shall see) the commencement of that work on which are built our hopes of eternal life when time with all its distinctions shall have passed away. And much it were to be wished that these Festivals and Holy Seasons were universally observed according to the truly Catholic appointment of our Church; not only as affording an additional means of cherishing a spirit of piety among our people, but

in the most effectual way instructing them in the great facts of the history of our Redemption, which in their revolution they embrace.

To proceed, then, to the subject of the Day—the event recorded in the Text, we shall inquire, first, into the import of the Ordinance here submitted to by the Saviour Christ; Secondly, into the end for which He submitted to it; after which we shall see the importance of this fact to ourselves.

I. First,—The rite of circumcision was the outward act by which, in the Jewish Dispensation, a person was brought under the Law, and obtained an interest in those promises and blessings which, according to the covenant made with Israel, depended on obedience to it.

This is evident from the circumcision of children being made the stipulation of their being numbered among the people (Gen. xvii. 14 &c.); and also from its being the form of admitting “strangers” to communion with them, as we learn from Exod. xii. 48, 49:—“And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover to the Lord, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land: for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof. One law shall be to him that is home-

“born, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among “you.” Whence also it implied the obligation to obey the whole Law; as stated by the Apostle, Gal. v. 3, “For I testify again to every man that is “circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole “law;” and again Rom. ii. 25,—“For circumcision “verily profiteth if thou keep the law: but if thou “be a breaker of the law thy circumcision is made “uncircumcision.”

2. But while it thus declared the obligation to obedience perfect and uncompromised, it is very remarkable that it taught equally clearly that man *after the flesh*, man *natural*, is utterly incapable of this righteousness: and more—that, in consequence of its innate depravity,—by reason of that ‘Original or Birth-Sin which is the fault and corruption of the Nature of every man that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam,’—the mortification of the flesh, or, (in the words of the Apostle, Col. ii. 11, referring to this ordinance) “the *putting off* the body of the sins of the flesh,” or “*the sinful body of the flesh*,” is indispensable in order to man’s entering into covenant with God, or being conformed to His Will.

Here then was the state of man under the Law, as signified by this initiatory rite:—under an obligation to keep the whole, and yet carrying about with him

the witness to his incapacity to perform it—the sign and token of the corruption of his nature, and so the sentence of its death and of the curse which it deserves according to the declaration “Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the Law to do them.”

II. We pass now, in the second place, to the end for which the Ordinance was submitted to by Christ.

1. By His circumcision Christ was, as Son of Man, in common with every other circumcised person, “made under the law;” as it is written in Gal. iv. 4—“when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, *made under the Law* :” that is, “made of a woman” at His birth, and “made under the Law” by His circumcision :—and, consequently, bound by the obligation to entire obedience, which, we have seen, this rite implied. In which act also, in a very principal part, consisted His humiliation ; as we read again in Phil. ii. 7—“He made himself of no reputation, *taking upon Him the form of a servant*, being made in the likeness of “men” (Gr.):—His Birth, “being found in fashion as a man,” one step (and a deep one) in condescension ; His circumcision another, by which He completely identified Himself with man in his position of

greatest responsibility—"under law," and took upon Him all the conditions which it prescribed.

But here is the glorious difference,—that where all others had failed and were found wanting He succeeded and was proved sufficient. He fulfilled the Law which convinced all others of sin: He complied with the terms of the covenant of which circumcision was the sign, and so became (what none other had been before) entitled to the blessings promised to obedience. He was emphatically, "THE JUST ONE"—"Who did no sin neither was guile found in His mouth"—"The righteous servant" of Jehovah.

2. Not, it is carefully to be noted, that this perfect obedience was rendered and these conditions fulfilled by Him in the power of the flesh. No: though himself without sin, yet (as stated Rom. viii. 3) He was made "in the likeness of sinful flesh," and for this reason—that He might "condemn sin in the flesh:" which He did indeed chiefly when He was offered as "a sacrifice for sin" (*ib. margin*), when "He bare our sins in His own body on the tree" and "was made a curse for us:" but also by His Circumcision, being as it was in fact the commencement of His sufferings in it—the witness to the desert of sin, and the first shedding of that "precious blood" by which it was afterwards fully and for ever expiated. But that of which circumcision in all others

before Him had only testified the need, was in Him supplied—even that Spirit by which his humanity had been conceived and generated holy (as lately commemorated by us); and in this power it was, as *life—a new life* originated by Him for men—He rendered, as man, that obedience to the Law for which, in itself, the flesh or human nature had been proved even in its best estate incompetent. This, however, is a Truth which will more properly come before us on a future occasion : and we pass therefore to notice,

III. In the last place, the importance of the present event to ourselves ; or the results to us from it, which are two :—and,

1. First,—The event of this day was the commencement of the great work of our “*justification*,” because the commencement of that work of obedience by which the Saviour Christ in “the form of a servant” presented human nature, presented MAN, for the first time since the Fall righteous before God : and so became the Author of redemption which must needs be “by righteousness ;” by One who, as without sin, could “make His soul an offering for sin,” and in virtue of the same righteousness recover that which by unrighteousness had been lost. For this is Justification. It is not pardon only, but a legal pardon—a pardon consistent with the utmost requirements

of justice and the fulfilment of the irrevocable sentence of the Law against sin. It is grace, but "grace reigning through righteousness." Life, life eternal; but as the reward of obedience, as is death the wages of sin. As the Lord had long before defined it by His Prophet,—“By His knowledge (*or the knowledge of Him*) shall My *righteous* servant *justify* many; “for He shall bear their iniquities. *Therefore* will I “divide Him a portion with the great and He shall “divide the spoil with the strong; because He hath “poured out His soul unto death.” (Isa. liii. 11, 12.)

2. But the Circumcision of Christ is also our *Sanctification*: not only the undertaking of a work done *for us*, but the manifestation of a power to work *in us*: the origin to us of a circumcision which is circumcision indeed—even that which is defined in the Prayer of the Collect for this Festival, in which we say, ‘Almighty God, who madest Thy blessed Son ‘to be circumcised and obedient to the Law for man, ‘Grant us the true circumcision of **THE SPIRIT**; that, ‘our hearts and all our members being mortified from ‘all worldly and carnal lusts, we may in all things ‘obey Thy blessed will:’ no longer a circumcision outward in the flesh, the witness (as already said) to a need—a sign without the thing signified, without an inward grace accompanying: but a “circumcision

made without hands” by a better ordinance—even Baptism—which supplies the need in us as in Christ, and makes us partakers of His grace. As the Apostle compares and at the same time contrasts both in a passage already partly adverted to, Col. ii. 9—12 : “ For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead “bodily. And ye are complete [filled] in him, which “is the head of all principality and power : in whom “also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made “without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of “the flesh by the circumcision of Christ ; buried “with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with “him through the faith of the operation of God, who “hath raised him from the dead.”

In the power of which risen life, the Christian, *as the spiritual man*, does as the Church prays—he obeys the will and fulfils the Law of God ; as this Apostle distinctly teaches in another place, Rom. viii. 2—4, also before referred to :—“ For the Law of the “Spirit of (the) life in Christ Jesus, hath made me “free from the law of sin and death,” (i.e. the law operating to produce sin and then death, as follows ;) “ For, what the law could not do in that it was weak “through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the “likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin “in the flesh : *that the righteousness of the law might “be fulfilled in us* who walk, not after the flesh, but,

"*after the Spirit:*"—where that it is not of an imputed righteousness the Apostle speaks, (as some would, explain his words), but of righteousness actual and personal, is evident, not only from the context both before and after, but, from the words "who *walk* not after the flesh but after the Spirit." For though it be unalterably true that "the mind of the flesh is "enmity" against God for it is not subject to the law "of God neither can be;" (ver. 7. *Gr*;) and also that 'this infection of nature doth remain, yea, in them that are regenerated,' as our Church teaches*; it is equally true that "if Christ be *in* us"—by His Spirit indwelling—"the body is dead because of sin," as was set forth in circumcision, "but the Spirit is life because of righteousness;" (ib. ver. 9, 10;)—righteousness being as essentially an attribute of the Spirit as sin is of the flesh: so that every regenerate man may say with this same Apostle, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man," while, with him also, lamenting another law—"the law of sin which is in his members," (chap. vii. 22, 23;) 'members' which we pray may be continually 'mortified from all worldly and carnal lusts' by 'the circumcision of the Spirit,' but which are not now the subject of renewal, nor will be until that—having been actually subjected to death in consequence of

* Article ix. 'Of Original or Birth-Sin.'

this "law of sin" in them—they are quickened anew out of it, in the power of an undying and sinless life, in Resurrection.

And now, such being the import of the circumcision of Christ—such the blessings to us implied in it—we see how fitting an occasion it was for His receiving that NAME by which especially He is declared to be our Saviour; as stated in our Text—"And when "eight days were accomplished for the circumcising "of the child, His name was called JESUS which was "so named of the angel before he was conceived in "the womb:"—a Name of which the interpretation was at the same time afforded—"Thou shalt call His "name JESUS, for He shall SAVE His people from "their sins." (Matt. i. 21.)

The custom of naming children at the time of their being circumcised seems to have been coeval with the ordinance itself; as we find the naming and circumcising of Isaac mentioned together, Gen. xxi. 3, 4: whence we may infer that it was by Divine direction. And this is confirmed by the fact that the Name had usually, as in Isaac's instance, a spiritual meaning expressive of an interest in the Covenant of promise; whence it would be fitly given at the time when the child was admitted within the pale of the Covenant, and in connexion with that rite by which was set

forth its dying to the world and the flesh, and its birth to new hopes. And so the Church now confers the Name in Baptism, and with better reason; inasmuch as this Ordinance has the promise of that spiritual Life of which circumcision taught the necessity but could not confer it; setting forth, indeed, significantly 'a death unto sin,' but not 'a new birth unto righteousness' except in type or shadow. And by this Name, accordingly,—which was also generally in primitive times, and is often still, significant of some gracious quality or blessing invoked—the members of the Church continue thenceforth to be exclusively denoted in all its offices*: the sir-name (i.e. *sire*-name) being that by which the baptized are designated as of the family of man and born after the flesh; the Christian Name that which connects them with the family of God as born after the Spirit. Would that we were all constantly mindful of the holy relation of which that Name is the sign, as well as worthily prized the nobleness which it confers above that of earthly race and pedigree which is the boast of "the children of this world;" who in this, as in other instances, "are wiser than the children of light," and in their regard for the honour of their family-name set us an example!

But like as of the ordinances themselves, Circum-

* E. g. The Catechism: The Marriage-Service; &c.

cision and Baptism, so of the Names then conferred—their whole import and significancy, the title conferred and the Covenant relation implied in them, are solely owing to one Name, to the giving of which all Names given before or since in the family of God have had respect—the Name of “JESUS” and the occasion when HE was so called: when in being ‘made to be circumcised’ He was also ‘made obedient to the Law for man’ and thereby declared to be “the end of that Law for righteousness to every one that believeth,”—to be our “SAVIOUR,” the Author to us of spiritual and eternal Life. This Event we now celebrate—this Feast we now keep: and, keeping it, (as remarked at the beginning) we celebrate a more joyful event than the commencement of a New Year, even though it had the promise of many days and years to come: for we celebrate the Anniversary of the work of Salvation begun, and, with it, the commencement of Eternity, the dawn of “Life and immortality brought to light by the gospel.”

THE LIFE OF CHRIST.

III.—HIS EPIPHANY, OR MANIFESTATION BY A STAR TO THE EASTERN MAGI

ST. MATTHEW ii. 1, 2.

“Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the East to Jerusalem, saying, Where is He that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the East and are come to worship Him.”

THOUGH at His first coming the Saviour appeared in humiliation, yet were there in His history several attestations to His true Dignity and Glory, far surpassing, when rightly understood, all the circumstances of earthly Majesty: of which the event recorded in this passage is one—commemorated on this day* by the Church as ‘*The Epiphany or Manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles*,’ and deemed of such importance as to have been selected to mark one

* January 6th. As to the distance of time of this Transaction from the Nativity Chronologists differ considerably, the most part postponing it to the Presentation. I follow, however, the order of the Festivals in which this has the precedence.

of the Seasons of the Ecclesiastical Year extending over a period of six weeks, the Sundays of which are designated with reference to it: though, again we have to lament, that this Festival, as well as the preceding, is utterly disregarded in many places by members of our Church, and the service appointed for it suffered to fall into disuse. This, my Brethren, I repeat, ought not to be: and I trust we may hope soon to see it otherwise—to see our congregations coming forward to join their ministers in reviving those services, without which concurrence on their part the design of the Church in the appointment will not be realized or the intended practical benefits derived from it.

We shall first consider the particulars of the transaction itself: and afterwards its import or the instruction to be derived from it.

I. First,—As to the event itself, it is strange that it should be considered by some learned Expositors a matter of uncertainty whence these Eastern Sages, or “Magi” as they are termed in the original, derived the information which led them to undertake this journey, and enabled them to interpret rightly the sign sent to direct them: it being most evident that, as it could only have been from Divine revelation, so it was from an ancient Prophecy so clearly bearing

on the transaction that I feel I must be anticipated in mentioning it—namely the very remarkable Prophecy of Balaam preserved to us in the xxivth. chap. of the Book of Numbers at the 17th. verse: where speaking, as all acknowledge, of the Messiah, he says—

“ I shall see Him, but not now :

“ I shall behold Him, but not nigh :

“ There shall come a STAR out of Jacob,

“ And a SCEPTRE shall rise out of Israel.”

* * * * *

For, in the first place, this is just the information which they possessed, as indicated by their question —“Where is He that is born KING of the Jews? for “we have seen His STAR in the East.” The very sign specified was given them—“a Star;” the prophecy in this respect literally fulfilled—more literally indeed than modern systems of Prophetical interpretation would prepare us to expect, which explain every thing in the Prophecies figuratively or, as they say, spiritually, in defiance of the fact of the literal and marvellously accurate fulfilment of all those that as yet have been undoubtedly fulfilled, and, among the number, of this one, in so far as accomplished. “*A Star*” appeared, doubtless selected as a sign sure to be looked for and noticed in a country of which the Sages were noted for the study of astronomy;

while that it should indicate the birth of a "*King*," and of a "*King of the Jews*" (of which it is indeed otherwise inconceivable that they should have been aware) the Prophecy had also said,—"*There shall come a STAR out of Jacob, and a SCEPTRE shall rise out of Israel.*" . . . And, in the second place, if it be asked—How should they come to be aware of the Prophecy of Balaam? The answer is that they were of the same country as the Prophet: for we are told that they came "*from the East to Jerusalem*;" and if we refer to Numbers xxiii. 7, we shall find that from thence also it was that Balak king of Moab sent to fetch Balaam:—"And he took up his parable and said, Balak the king of Moab hath brought me from *Aram, out of the mountains of the East*, saying, 'Come, curse me Jacob, and come defy Israel:'" the sequel of his prophecy moreover—"and shall smite the corners of Moab and destroy all the children of Sheth &c. ver. 18 & 19, . . .," (of which we cannot now speak particularly except to say that it may also be yet more literally fulfilled than many imagine)—leading to the conclusion that the country in which it was thus preserved and handed down would be concerned in the rise of this King and Conqueror and be subject to His rule; and so securing a constant expectation of the promised sign on the part of its people.

And very delightful it is to think how many thus in the generations intervening—in that region distant from the Land of revelation—cherished the hope of the Saviour to come by means of this one Oracle; their darkness relieved by this single ray of Divine light! More so still to know that, in that long interval, it was a light to *Gentiles*—one of many proofs that salvation was not limited to the Election even during the period of so exclusive a dispensation as that of Israel: for, the hypothesis that the Magi were Israelites, hazarded by some, is only an expedient to solve a supposed difficulty; and is altogether excluded, not only by the evidence now adduced, but, by the judgment of the Catholic Church from the beginning, in the designation of this Festival and the end to which it is consecrated.

II. With this explanation, then, of the facts, we pass to the import of this remarkable occurrence, which is twofold:

1. And first—Looked at merely as an historical Event—a circumstance attending on the Birth and first coming of the Saviour—its importance is great as bearing both on His *Person* and *Mission*.

On His *Person*—inasmuch as, in the absence of earthly circumstances of glory, it was (as already intimated) a marked attestation to His DIVINITY and

to the glorious pretensions which His humiliation disguised, in *the worship* of the Magi, as well as their *offerings* to the Infant Jesus; especially taking into account the fact that they were Divinely directed to Him, as we learn from verses 9—11, “And, lo, “the Star which they saw in the East went before “them, till it came and stood over where the young “child was. When they saw the star they rejoiced “with exceeding great joy: and when they were come “into the house they saw the young child with Mary “His mother, and *fell down and worshipped Him*: “and when they had opened their treasures, *they presented unto Him gifts*; gold and frankincense and “myrrh.” And a testimony not only to His Divinity but to His MESSIAHSHIP; according to the involuntary evidence of “the chief priests and scribes of the people,” called together on the occasion by Herod, who gave it as their deliberate judgment, founded on the Prophets, that “the Christ” i.e. “the Messiah,” (as we should read ver. 4), should be born “in Bethlehem of Judea,” whither the star forthwith directed the wise men!

While as to His *Mission* and its objects, the emblem of “the Star” beautifully illustrated the character in which He came into the world, as “The Light of life” to give the knowledge of Salvation; as His advent is celebrated in the song of Zachariah,

Luke i. 77—79, "To give knowledge of Salvation unto His people by the remission of their sins; through the tender mercy of our God whereby the day-spring from on high hath visited us; to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death; to guide our feet into the way of peace:" in addition to which the fact that "the Magi" were (as just remarked) Gentiles, showed that He was not only to be "the glory of His people Israel" but "a light to lighten the Gentiles," to quote the words of another song indited on the occasion—the Song of Simeon, Luke ii. 32.

2. But much more than this was signified by this Event. For, these Passages of glory in the Saviour's life were not for evidence only. They were not merely historical events, limited in their application, or the lesson which they teach, to the occasion or even the objects of His first coming. They were exceptions to His humiliation; and, as such, TYPES or specimens foreshowing the character and objects of another dispensation yet future—even the dispensation of His manifested Glory, of "His appearing and kingdom."

Thus "the Star"—the emblem of "Light"—is also the emblem of Royalty and Triumph, and so intended in the Prophecy as well as understood by the

Magi whom it guided: "a *star* shall come out of " Jacob, and a *sceptre* shall rise out of Israel, and " *shall smite* the corners of Moab and *destroy* all the " children of Sheth. . . ." the Second Advent application of the emblem as we learn from Rev. ii. 25—28; "That which ye have hold fast **TILL I COME**; " and he that overcometh and keepeth my works unto " the end, to him will I give *power over the nations*: " and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the " vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers, " even as I received of my Father. *And I will give " him the morning star*:"—evidently here the badge or insignia of rule and victory.

Again,—The Prophecy foretold the coming of a " *King of Israel*," as also the Magi well understood it, saying "Where is He that is born *King of the " Jews?* for we have seen *His* star in the East . . ." and though at His first coming Christ asserted this Title, and died a martyr to this claim, yet "the kingdom of Israel" did not then come, nor has it even yet come: though we are assured it will come at that period which forms the theme of the 60th chap. of Isaiah (well chosen for the first lesson for this Festival) when "Zion's light shall come and the " **GLORY** of the Lord shall rise upon her; . . . and " the Gentiles shall come to her light *and kings to the " brightness of her rising*:"—a "glory" and "light"

and "brightness of rising" none other than that of the glorious Epiphany of the Saviour Himself, predicted in the verse next before but one, ch. lix. 20.

And last,—The *worship* and *offerings* of the Magi, while (as already said) a present attestation to His Divinity, afforded also the Type of a future glory—of a repetition of the same homage on a larger scale from distant lands and nations to the King of Israel, when, as foretold in Psalm lxxii. 10, 11, "The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents; the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve Him"—and this when He shall be revealed as the Antitype of Solomon, as the context of the Psalm proves. Or, as it is more fully stated in the sublime prophecy of Isaiah just referred to—chap. lx., in the address to Zion restored and glorified, ver. 5—9; "Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee. The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all they from Sheba shall come: they shall bring gold and incense; and they shall show forth the praises of the LORD. All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto thee, the rams of Nebaioth shall

"minister unto thee: they shall come up with acceptance on mine altar, and I will glorify the house of my glory. Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows? Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the Lord thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel, because he hath glorified thee."—And again, ver. 13, "The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir-tree, the pine-tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious."—And again, ver. 16, "Thou shalt also suck the milk of the Gentiles, and shalt suck the breast of kings: and thou shalt know that I the LORD am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob."

And now, What is the application of this subject to ourselves? It is twofold, corresponding to the twofold aspect of this remarkable passage in the Life of our blessed Lord.

(1.) Regarding it as 'The Manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles' it calls upon us to rejoice with thankfulness. To rejoice in "the *Epiphany* of the GRACE of God bringing Salvation." (Titus ii. 11, Gr.). As recorded of the Magi that "when they saw the star

they rejoiced with exceeding great joy," so may we well rejoice with them—we who know so much more of that "Grace" than did they!

To rejoice with thankfulness, especially, that no sooner was that Grace revealed than God in His great mercy hastened to make it known to *the Gentiles*, who were thus, if not the first, among the first worshippers at the feet of the Infant Saviour. Truly it becomes us to take heed to the exhortation of the Apostle, in reference to this same mercy towards us,—“Wherefore remember that ye were in times past Gentiles . . . that at that time ye were without Christ, “being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and “strangers from the covenants of promise, having no “hope, and without God in the world: but now, in “Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off are “made nigh by the blood of Christ.” And well may the Church therefore celebrate the event from year to year: for it is a day to be much remembered to the Lord in our generations and families who are so deeply concerned in the result.

(2.) But we have seen it was a type—or more, an earnest of another event yet to come: of another “*Epiphany*,”—even “the Epiphany of the GLORY of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ:” * and in this view we should again rejoice, at the prospect

* Titus ii., as before, ver. 13 Gr.

it opens (to use the words of the Collect) of 'the fruition of the glorious Godhead' hereafter, when that glory shall be unveiled; as also at the confirmation of that hope which it affords, inasmuch as by such *specimens* of "the power and Coming" and "Majesty" of the Saviour, (to adopt the words of an Apostle relative to another of them—His Transfiguration) "we have the word of prophecy more sure" which promises that event, and are encouraged still to wait for His Second Advent while celebrating His First.

THE LIFE OF CHRIST.

IV.—HIS PRESENTATION IN THE TEMPLE.

ST. LUKE ii. 25—32.

“And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord’s Christ. And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.”

THERE are two considerations which commend the inspired Song of Simeon here recorded to our special attention: the one, that it has been most appropriately given a place in the daily service of our Church as one of the Evening Hymns or Canticles; and not of our Church only but also in the services of all Christian Churches in the world, Greek, Roman, and Reformed¹: the other, that the occasion of it is com-

¹ See Wheatly, Com. Prayer, in loco.

memorated annually by one of our Festivals, (as on this day,¹) for which it is the appointed Gospel, namely, '*The Presentation of Christ in the Temple*;' which, it may be remarked, though commonly called 'The Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary,' from that ceremony having taken place at the same time, is really one of the Festivals relating to our Lord and designed to celebrate this the next recorded event of His Life after His Circumcision; as also appears from the Collect and Epistle which refer to it exclusively.

We shall first consider the Song itself, with the circumstances under which it was uttered; after which we shall see its suitability to ourselves and the sense in which we now adopt its language.

I. The occasion, as we are informed ver. 22—24, was the Presentation to the Lord of the Infant Jesus, in conformity with a Law which commanded that every first-born male of the children of Israel should be holy or dedicated to Him; in remembrance of and gratitude for the preservation of that people from the last and most awful of the judgments inflicted on their oppressors the Egyptians, on the night of the Exodus, when the destroying angel passed through the land and slew the first-born of every family.

But in Christ's instance this ordinance, as well as

¹ Feby. 2d.

His Circumcision, had an import which it had in no other: for, while others celebrated in it their redemption, He was the Redeemer; He was the very Paschal Lamb the blood of which, sprinkled on the door-posts of the Israelites' houses on that memorable night, was the token for the Lord to "pass-over" them and not suffer the destroyer to enter. In addition to which, we must remember, it was His first appearing in the Temple: in that Temple where for hundreds of years His coming and His offering of Himself as a sacrifice for sin had been typified day by day, morning and evening; and in whom its every ordinance and service was to have its end, its substance, and accomplishment: the scope and significance of all its worship,—at once the Sacrifice and the Priest by whom it was offered—the "Tabernacle" and the "glory" which it enshrined.

Accordingly, God had provided that an Event of such great moment and such intense interest should not pass without a testimony to signalize it and declare this its high import. The crowd, indeed, frequenting the Temple saw nothing in it but the compliance with an ordinary custom on the part of an Infant whose mother was so humble in station as to be obliged to avail herself of the offering, on her purification, appointed for the poor—"a pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons" instead of a lamb:

(compare ver. 24 with Lev. xii. 8.) But there were those at the time "who looked for redemption in Jerusalem" (ver. 38), and one of them the Lord had prepared by a special revelation to be His witness on the occasion, as we read ver. 25,—“And, behold, “there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was “Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, “waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy “Ghost was upon him. And it was revealed unto “him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see “death, before he had seen the Lord’s Christ:”—(a distinction conferred on him, doubtless, in reward for his faith which, it would appear, had been much tried by the deferring of his hope; till, now advanced in years, he began to despair of seeing it realized): “And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and “when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do “for him after the custom of the law, then took he “him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, “Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, “according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen “thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the “face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, “and the glory of thy people Israel.”

Here then, in this inspired testimony to the Infant Jesus, we observe—

1. First,—The designation given Him, *The Salvation of God*: “Mine eyes have seen **THY SALVATION**:” “The Lord’s Christ” as he had been previously named to Simeon, (ver. 26): The Saviour of God’s appointment—“which Thou hast prepared” a testimony remarkably similar to that borne on His after-manifestation to Israel, and also by a witness specially commissioned and inspired for the occasion—that, namely, of the Baptist on the Saviour’s first appearing in public, “Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world:”—“The Lamb of God,” of His providing. A Truth thus prominently put forward because of its inestimable importance; inasmuch as it is in fact at once the evidence of the *sufficiency* of this “salvation,” and the warrant of our *faith* and *hope* in Him who is the Author of it. “Whom—as St. Paul states the same truth—*God hath set forth* to be a propitiation through *faith* in His blood,” (Rom. iii. 25): the warrant of “faith” (I say) this—not only the suitability or intrinsic worth (as far as we are capable of judging) of the “propitiation;” but, altogether irrespective of this—the fact that He is “*set forth*,”¹ according to the *purpose*² of God, “to be a propitiation.” Without this sanction it should be evident that no way of salvation, no means of effecting our reconciliation to God, no

¹ *agido*² Compare Ephes. i. 9. Gr.

ground of hope or of peace with God, could avail any thing, howsoever suitable in itself or reasonable it might appear to us: and for this cause—that as it is against Him we have sinned so with Him it must rest to dictate the terms of our acceptance. And this, (blessed be God!), He hath done. It is our great privilege to be assured that “the Lord hath made known *His* salvation:” *He hath laid* a foundation, in which, *therefore*, there is everlasting security; as it is written (Isa. xxviii. 16) “Thus saith the Lord God, “Behold I LAY in Zion for a foundation a stone, a “tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not be confounded.” “To Him give all the Prophets witness.” “Him hath God the Father sealed;” and, therefore, “whoso believeth in Him hath everlasting life.”

2. But Simeon’s testimony is not confined to “Salvation” in this view of it, or to that object of the Saviour’s coming witnessed by the Baptist; because the *occasion* was one which led the mind beyond this—from this first appearing, this first coming of the Lord to His Temple, to another under far different circumstances—even that which is the subject of the Prophecy of Malachi, chapter iii., the epistle for this day: whence, as in the Prophets of former time, the Spirit in him “testifies before-

"hand the sufferings of Christ *and the glory that should follow.*" He sees salvation not only for himself or for his nation, in this the long-expected seed of Abraham, but anticipates the time when, according to the promise, "all the nations of the earth shall be blessed" in Him:—"Which" (he adds) "Thou hast prepared before the face of all people:" (lit. "*of all the peoples.*"): a form of expression evidently intended to point to the *general* and *national* conversion of the world, which had been the subject of prophecy from the beginning, to take place in "the last days;" as in Isaiah chap. ii. 2, 3,—"*It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.*" And again, Jeremiah iii. 17,—"*At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart.*" &c.

Which is confirmed by, and at the same time explains, the distinction in the next verse—

“A LIGHT to lighten the Gentiles

“And the GLORY of Thy people Israel:”—

the same *order* and *distinction* observable in these and all the prophecies of that Dispensation, when, (in the words of another—that of the second Psalm), to Christ, “set as King on God’s holy hill of Zion,” shall be given “the heathen (the nations or Gentiles) “for His inheritance, and the utmost parts of the “earth for His possession:” when to Israel He shall be revealed as the Antitype of that ancient Symbol—the visible token or sign of the Theocracy and the distinguishing privilege of the nation—the Shechinah or “GLORY” dwelling between the Cherubims, “Himself the glory in the midst of them,” (Zech. ii. 5): and when this their “*glory*” shall be “*a light* to the Gentiles;” according to Isa. lx. 1—3, quoted in last Discourse, and to which Simeon seems specially to refer—

“Arise, shine, for THY LIGHT is come

“And THE GLORY of Jehovah is risen upon thee.

“For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth

“And gross darkness the people:

“But Jehovah shall arise upon thee

“And His Glory shall be seen upon thee.

“And THE GENTILES shall come to THY LIGHT,

“And kings to the brightness of THY RISING:”—

a Prophecy, (it may be here remarked,) relating—not to ‘The Blessings of the Gospel and Enlargement of the Church’ as stated in the Heading of the chapter or Translators’ preface, but—to “Zion” and “Jacob” literal, as marked by the distinct mention of “the Gentiles,” and stated in the context immediately preceding: and awaiting its accomplishment at the period typified by the Event last considered, to which also it is possible that Simeon here alludes, when (as we saw) the representatives of nations far distant came to Jerusalem to pay their homage to “the king of the Jews;” guided by a star—at once the emblem of LIGHT and GLORY—the glory of the SCPTRE to rise out of Israel, and the LIGHT to guide into the way of peace the feet of them that sat in darkness and the shadow of Death.

But I hasten from this brief notice of the occasion and import of this Sacred Song, to point out, as proposed,—

II. In the Second place—Its suitability to ourselves and to the place it holds in our daily Service.

It might, indeed, be supposed that, at this distance of time and in circumstances so different in many respects as are ours, the words of Simeon in which he celebrated the Birth of the Saviour would be little applicable to us or fit for our adoption.

But, notwithstanding this, we shall find that, in its main and distinctive features just brought before us, our position—the position of the Church—is the same now as was his then; on the one hand as to his faith, and on the other as to his hope. For,—

1. As to his *faith*—There is indeed in our case this difference, that we have fuller evidence of the same truth. For, he had seen but one fact of the New Testament revelation—a fact, however, which he was enabled to take as an earnest of the whole. He had seen the Saviour born—the Virgin's Son and the “Emmanuel,” “God with us” and in our nature; and *this* made all easy to believe which before was all but incredible: like Abraham who, when once he had seen Isaac, is said to have “received the promises” and asked no more for assurance—no more asked the question “How shall I know that I shall inherit?” While *we* have seen not only the Birth of Christ, but His Death—His Resurrection—His Ascension! And how truly then—with how much fuller faith and deeper conviction—should we be able to say, each for himself, “Mine eyes have seen Thy Salvation?”

2. But though we have this great advantage in the degree of assurance of faith in this “Salvation;” in *hope*, or as to *the Prospect opened to him in its accom-*

plishment, we may be said still to stand where Simeon stood. For, acknowledging, as with thankfulness we should, that Christ has proved "a light to lighten the Gentiles," not yet is this realized to the extent nor in the terms of this song: not yet is His Salvation manifested, as "prepared," or destined to be, "before the face of all the peoples;" nor is He yet the enlightener of the Gentiles or "the nations" as such, but only of "a people taken out of the Gentiles to the name of God" as the present Christian Church is defined (Acts xv. 14). While as to Israel, so far from being their "Glory," He has hitherto but proved to them, as at the first, "a stone of stumbling and rock of offence." And more,—on this their unbelief is dependent in the Divine Economy the call of the Gentiles in this our Dispensation, which, as it is one of "Election" as respects us, is one of "blindness" and rejection as it respects Israel; as the Apostle of the Gentiles, to whom first this mystery was made known, teaches in the 11th. chapter of his epistle to the Romans: and so to continue until—in the words of a Prophecy quoted (be it observed) by him as yet unfulfilled long after the First Advent—until "there shall come out of Zion "the Deliverer and shall turn away ungodliness from "Jacob" (the prophecy of Isa. lix. 20, as quoted in Rom. xi. 26); when, he adds, "all Israel shall be

saved," and at the same time "the fulness of the Gentiles shall come in." (ib. 25).*

For this we wait—for the Second Coming and appearing of the glory of the Redeemer: in reference to which our position is like to that of the faithful who with Simeon "looked for redemption in Jerusalem" and "waited for the consolation of Israel." For, we also look for redemption; as saith the Apostle, "we, which have the *first-fruits* of the Spirit, "even we ourselves groan within ourselves waiting "for the adoption (to wit) the *redemption* of our body; "for we are saved in hope;" (Rom. viii. 23, 24); and again, speaking of the same Spirit, (Ephes. i. 14,) "which is the earnest of our inheritance until the *redemption* of the purchased possession unto the "praise of His glory." And we "look for the consolation"—not "of Israel" only, (for which indeed we ought to look and pray), but—of the Church; for "*her* warfare" also to be "accomplished," the time of her 'militancy,' and of her suffering with Christ in the hope of "reigning

* On the difference between the Election and The General Conversion of the Gentiles, as the objects respectively of the present and the succeeding Dispensations, as also on the Restoration and Conversion of Israel, I may be permitted to refer to my 'Lectures on the Second Advent and attendant Events,' and to Four Advent Sermons entitled 'The Pre-Millennial Advent of Christ demonstrated.'

with Him" and being "glorified together" hereafter.

In other words—The Church, in adopting this prophetic Song, is not to be understood to apply it to this present time, as though we now celebrated its fulfilment; but rather as expressive of her hope of the second coming of the Saviour, while declaring her faith in His first; an intention this—to cherish in her members "that blessed hope"—also (it may be remarked) indicated by the other Canticles selected for the same service—the Song of Mary which may be shown to refer prophetically to the same Crisis; and, more expressly, the Canticle "O sing unto the Lord," which is a Hymn of praise in anticipation of the Lord's "appearing and kingdom," evident from its last words,—"*Before the Lord, for He cometh to judge (i.e. to govern) the earth: with righteousness shall He judge the world, and the peoples with equity.*"

In conclusion:—With the *faith* and *hope* have we also the *mind* and *feelings* of Simeon? Are we affected in like manner? Can we take up his words and say each for himself—"Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace?" the expression not only of resignation in prospect of death but even of desire: "Lord *release* Thy servant," as the word is

often rendered and in reference to the *setting at liberty* a prisoner.* And if we cannot, Why not? It is because, notwithstanding our clearer evidence and fuller demonstration, we cannot say as he did—"For mine eyes have seen Thy salvation." We do not in the simplicity of Faith rest in the appointment of God: or we do not prize that salvation as he did,—feeling the Saviour to be our "consolation," our present peace, our future hope, our ALL. Or we do not see it in its fulness—looking at it only as salvation from wrath which, though the first concern of man in prospect of the dying hour, will not reconcile him to death, to leaving the world and the things of this life. In order to this we must "know in ourselves that we have in heaven a better and an "enduring substance" (Heb. x. 34); and we must see salvation not only as redemption but as "*glory*": not only the salvation which is, but that which is "ready to be revealed in the last time"—"the grace that is to be brought to us at the revelation of Jesus Christ," exceeding all that we can desire, all that we here see, or have, or are. So shall we too "depart in peace:" and well, therefore, does the Church put this song in our mouth night by night in laying us down to rest, as the language with which we should be found best prepared for our last sleep. Let me exhort you to

* Matt. xv. 6, 9, and paral. ; Acts iv. 21, 23 ; and xxvi. 32, &c.

act upon this holy suggestion—to close your eyes each night repeating these words, and praying that they may be indeed your own: that, should it please your Lord to call you away before another day dawns, you may be ready to meet Him, as hoping in His word, believing in His salvation, and waiting for His coming.

THE LIFE OF CHRIST.

V.—HE ATTENDS THE FIRST PASSOVER, AND TARRIES IN JERUSALEM.

ST. LUKE ii. 49.

“ And He said unto them, How is it that ye sought me ? Wist ye not
“ that I must be about my Father’s business ! ”

WE have been led, in following the Order of the appointed Commemorations of the Church since Advent, to notice the several incidents of our Lord’s Life comprised in the period of His Infancy, namely, His Nativity—Circumcision—Epiphany or Manifestation by a Star to the Eastern Magi—and, in the last Discourse, His Presentation in the Temple : and it has occurred to me that it would be profitable for us to continue the subject so far pursued—to notice the remaining Events of *the personal history* of the Redeemer ; by which I mean, not His teaching or numerous miracles which would open too large a field ; but, the transactions (like those now enumer-

ated) more immediately affecting Himself: in doing which I feel that I shall be most effectually preaching, and you learning Christ; inasmuch as it is in His Life regarded as a whole, and not in any one event of it, that we have the facts and full development of THE GOSPEL.

Proceeding then with this course, I observe that the Transaction to which the words now read relate occupies a remarkable place in the Narrative of our Lord's life on earth; being the only event recorded from His infancy to the time of His entrance on His public ministry—a period of nearly thirty years. We would indeed have desired more information respecting the interval: but, as it has been withheld, we must conclude that it was not necessary to the great object for which the Scriptures have been given —“to make wise unto Salvation:” while this silence seems to give the more importance to the one notice which we here meet.

The occasion then, we should bear in mind, was His first attendance on the Passover, as stated in verses 41, 42:—“Now His Parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover: and “when he was twelve years old, they went up to “Jerusalem after the custom of the feast.” That is, He for the first time then accompanied them; that being the age when young persons were considered

to come under the obligation of the Ceremonial Law, as Jewish writers inform us:—a solemn occasion, analogous to the Confirmation and first Communion of our youth, a season of special dedication to the service of God : and therefore in the Saviour's instance an occasion, like as His Presentation, for a declaration of the purpose for which He came into the world, of the service to which He had devoted Himself : and such accordingly we find, not now from the lips of a witness as then, but from His own.

The Narrative proceeds to tell us that “when they “had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child “Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and “his mother knew not of it. But they, supposing “him to have been in the company, went a day’s “journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk “and acquaintance. And when they found him not, “they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him. “And it came to pass, that after three days they found “him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the “doctors, both hearing them, and asking them “questions. And all that heard him were astonished “at his understanding and answers.”

The time, indeed, for declaring Himself *openly* was not yet come; though we may suppose that in the “questions” put to the doctors, and the “answers,” at which “all who heard Him were astonished,” He

would (as a learner and in such way as became His years) lead to the subject of the Messiah's expected appearing and the Prophecies relating to it, so as to prepare for the recognition of Himself in that character when the time should come. But there were those who were already prepared to hear the Truth : —To His Parents He might speak plainly, and especially to her of whom it is written in reference to this transaction, as before of the circumstances of His Birth, "His mother kept all these sayings in her heart." And so, when, as the next verse informs us, she said unto Him in the language of affectionate reproof—"Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us ? "Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing ;" He takes the opportunity thus presented to remind them that *He* had a work to do which was paramount even to the duty to Parents of which He has set so bright an example : "And He said unto them, How is it that ye sought me ? Wist ye not "that I must be about my Father's business ?" It is added,—*"They understood not the saying which He spake unto them :"* but *we* have light to enable us to understand it which they had not—that of His after-teaching and History ; and in that light meditating on this "saying" there are several important lessons which it teaches : on the one hand, and primarily, respecting the Lord Jesus Christ Himself

and His Mission ; and, on the other, (as no event of His Life concerned Himself alone) respecting ourselves as His followers.

I. First then—The language which the Saviour employs here in reference to His Mission exhibits in an eminent degree *His love to the World*.

“My Father’s business :”—This, it will be remembered, is the way in which He ever spake of the work He came from heaven to accomplish. So in John v. 30, “I seek not mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me :” and again, ver. 36—“the work which the Father hath given me to finish,” &c. ; and again, chap. vi. 38, “For I came down from heaven not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me.” And when we consider what that “will” of the Father was—what this “business” on which He came, How great, I say, is the proof we have of His love to the world, to us ! That it was that will of God which He is prophetically represented as volunteering in the words of Ps. xl. 6—8, “Sacrifice and offering Thou didst not desire ; “Mine ears hast Thou opened :” (or “bored” or “pierced”—a strong expression for willing obedience and devoted service taken from the custom mentioned Exod. xxi. 6, of nailing to the door-post of the house the ear of a servant who from affection for his Master

would not accept of his liberty, in token that he should be his for ever): "burnt-offering and sin-offering hast Thou not required. Then said I, Lo, "I come: in the volume of the book it is written of "me, I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy "law is within my heart;" namely, to give "the sacrifice of Himself" instead of the sacrifices here referred to; to lay down His own life as an atonement for sin: even the same "will" and "pleasure" of the Lord Jehovah foretold again in Isaiah liii. 10,—"Yet it pleased Jehovah to bruise him; he hath "put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul "an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall "prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall "prosper in his hand:" or, as He named it in the hour of His greatest submission and trial—"The cup "which the Father had given Him to drink;" and relative to which He said—"Father, not My will but Thine be done."

THIS He volunteered for us—for fallen, sinful, unworthy, and helpless man—to save him from the death to which he was doomed: and *this* work He hastened to be occupied about: for *this* "business" denied the calls of natural affection: His answer to those who with all the anxiety of Parents had "sought Him sorrowing"—"How is it that ye sought me? "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's

"business?" For *this* He denied Himself; it was all for which he lived:—as He saith again, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me and to finish His work." And, when a word could have saved Him from all—when, as he said, in "the hour" of His enemies' triumph and "of the power of darkness," He could have instantly commanded the services of "legions of angels," every consideration for himself was lost in that one—"But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled that thus it must be?" that is to say—'How then shall the redemption of the world be accomplished?' the only "must be"—the only necessity that lay upon Him.

2. But again—no less does this answer of the Saviour declare *the love of The Father* to the world in His Mission.

It tells us that redemption, the object of that Mission in which we thus early find the Son of God occupied, is the "*business of His Father*"—*His Will and His Work*: and so, with all the passages already quoted to the same purpose and numerous others, it gives the refutation to that most revolting dogma (often put forward as the very essential truth of the Gospel) that the mission of the Son was for the reconciliation of the Father in the sense of moving Him to compassionate the world, and inducing Him to the exercise of mercy towards His sinful and

erring creatures. This is indeed the character of God which man natural draws—"thinking that God is such an one as himself," implacable and unmerciful: it is the notion of Deity which pervades every form of Heathenism; and it will also be found to enter more or less into every perversion of Christianity, whether the appeasing medium be the sacrifice of Christ or self-sacrifice in one form or another. But this is not the God of the Scriptures, whose name is declared to be "Love"—The Father Love; The Son Love; The Holy Ghost Love. The Father Love *in Himself*: The Son the Love of the Father *manifested* (as it is written, 1 John iv. 8, 9,—“God is “Love: In this was manifested the Love of God “toward us, because that God sent His Son into the “world that we might live through Him”): The Holy Spirit Love—the Love of the Father in the Son—*communicated*, the “*life*” itself in us which is its gift. Whence the Son, about to leave the world—(His Father’s “business,” of which He speaks in the Text, transacted—), says, “I have *glorified Thee* on “the earth; I have finished the work *which Thou “gavest me to do* . . . I have manifested **THY** “**NAME** unto the men whom Thou gavest me out of “the world. . . . Now they have known that “all things whatsoever Thou hast given me are of “**THEE**: for I have given unto them the words *which*

"*Thou gavest Me* ; and they have received them and "have known surely that *I came out from Thee*, and "they have believed that *Thou didst send me*." (John xvii. 4—8).*

II. But I said that these words before us are not only thus a declaration of the Mission of Christ, but also have a reference and application to ourselves as His disciples and followers.

That is—Christ in His Life on earth is set before us not only as our *Saviour*, and His actions not only in their bearing on the work which He came to accomplish for us, but as our *Example*; and this even in those sufferings by which was effected His atonement, as we learn from 1 Pet. ii. 21 &c.: His obedience as *a Son* in our nature being designed to

* There is, indeed, a sense in which The Father was reconciled to us by the death of The Son : that is, inasmuch as thereby the exercise of mercy was made consistent with justice, and a way of access opened for man as a sinner to that God whom he had offended; and who, otherwise, could only have stood revealed to him in avenging wrath, as "a consuming fire." In stating this, however, it is ever carefully to be remembered that the means of thus satisfying the Father's Justice are the provision of the Father's Love, and the access one which He Himself has opened; "For"—(to add another Scripture to those quoted above)—"*God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life*." (John iii. 16.)

teach obedience to those whom He makes *sons*. For He does make us Sons: as it is written—"As many "as received Him to them gave He power (the right "or privilege, *Marg.*) to become the *sons* of God, "even to them that believe on His name;" (John i. 12): and not only so, but, as another Scripture saith, "Because ye are Sons God hath sent forth the Spirit "of His Son into your hearts crying Abba, Father:" (Gal. iv. 6). But if the Spirit of the Son be ours, then is His language also ours, (as indeed here stated)—then in the Text also is He our example: and what, let us ask, are the lessons which in this view it teaches?

1. First—We learn the paramount claim upon us of the service of God. To all who would divert us from this one work our answer should be that of Christ—"Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business:" For, *this* is the end for which we were born—the end of our creation, and more especially the end of our redemption and regeneration—that we should "glorify God in our bodies and spirits which are His;" that we should live to Him and serve Him; that we should consider that we have each a work to do for Him and see that we are occupied in it. But, Is it not directly the reverse with the majority of those who name the name of

Christ and call God their "Father?" who, when we would urge upon them the service of God and ask them to reserve some time for Him—some portion of each day, suppose, for reading His word, for meditation and for prayer,—are ready to answer, 'How? Wist ye not that I must be about my worldly business?' while the world, or rather he who is the Prince and God of it, takes care to arrange the business of it so as most effectually to interfere with the business of God. Yea, and often on the day and at the hour when the Church would call us to the more immediate worship of God, to His service in the highest sense, this is still the pretext for absence: as if a blessing could be expected by men on their worldly business when the business or service of God is postponed to it!

2. Again,—This saying of the Son of God teaches those whom He makes children of God that the service of their Heavenly Father is, not only of paramount obligation, but, a service of *self-denial*. It was so in His case:—His Life was one of self-denial: from the time of His leaving "the glory which He had with the Father before the world was," when "though He was rich he became poor for our sakes," to the last hour of His sojourn on earth, "*He pleased not Himself.*" And so, would we follow Him faith-

fully, we must not only resist the importunities of business but the solicitations of pleasure—yea and even the calls of natural affection, if they should interfere with the claims of God's service upon us. Like the Apostle who exhorts us "to be followers of him as he was of Christ," we must not "confer with flesh and blood:" but with the Saviour Himself, as in the instance before us, be ready again to reply, even to the sorrowing remonstrance of those most dearly loved by us, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"

3. And last—we learn that this service should be in us as in Him, as a service of self-denial, so also of *Love to others*. Do you ask, How you are to do the work of God or be occupied in His business or service, otherwise than in the acts or on the occasions of His immediate worship? The answer is—In "the work and labour of love," like as Christ, "who went about doing good." For *this* He denied Himself. Love was the motive, love to Man the beginning and end of His Mission; by His Love (as we have seen) to Manifest the Love of the Father. And in *this* we are taught that pre-eminently consists our likeness to our Father which is in Heaven as His children, as well as our likeness to Christ: a service in which there is employment for all—measured only by the

wants spiritual and temporal of our fellow-creatures ; by the "infirmities and sicknesses" which He who is our example "bore" when on earth, and by "the sorrows" which He "carried;" a charge which, with His Spirit, He has bequeathed to us His disciples—to be His instruments to carry into effect the purposes of His love and the love of the Father to the world, and so to do "the work of God."

In conclusion : To the young especially this record and example addresses itself. It is the record and example of early-devotedness : for Jesus was yet "a child," but "twelve years old," when He was thus occupied and uttered this saying. And you, my young friends, have your Mission. You have been in Baptism dedicated to God and have been enlisted in His service : and more—You have been numbered among His children, and, of His rich mercy and great love, been entitled to call Him your "Father." "Be ye then followers of God as His beloved children;" and this by aiming to tread in HIS steps who for your sakes became a child and grew up to Man's stature; and of whom it is written that, as He "grew," He "waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon Him" (ver. 40). This "grace" is in measure for you also. Pray then for it daily; that you may be enabled to offer to God

that offering with which of all others He is most pleased—the affections, the energies, and devotion of youth; and so (in the words of our Confirmation Service) ‘continue His for ever, daily increasing in His holy Spirit until you come to His everlasting kingdom.’

THE LIFE OF CHRIST.

VI.—HIS BAPTISM.

ST. MATT. iii. 13—end.

“Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me! And Jesus answering, said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him: and, lo, a voice from heaven, saying, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

WE come now, in tracing the personal history of our Lord, to the time when He was to manifest Himself publicly and enter on the work of His Mission; immediately previous to which is the Event here recorded—His Baptism by John in Jordan: an Event which possesses a far greater importance than is often attached to it by Expositors; for, while in the opinion of some He only intended by this act to

set an example of respect to the ordinances of religion—and others suggest that the intention was to give His forerunner an opportunity of knowing and bearing witness to Him as now come—and others again seek for the reason in the precept of the Levitical Law which ordered a ceremonial washing with water preparatory to investiture with the Priesthood (Lev. viii. 6.)—we shall find that, as it is the introductory act to His Ministry, so, it has a most material bearing on it and the work which He came to accomplish; and thence on the Salvation and spiritual interests of all who are baptized in His name and who believe in Him.

I. In the first place then, as regarded Himself, His Baptism (we have the warrant of Scripture for saying) was the ANOINTING of the Saviour to the offices which, it was foretold, should meet in Him as the “MESSIAH”—namely of Prophet, Priest, and King.

To these offices, we know from the Old Testament history, those who preceded Him, and who were His Types, were set apart or consecrated by the ceremony of anointing: the *Priests*, as enjoined Exod. xxx. 30, with the “oil” or “ointment” there also prescribed, and which was held so sacred that the compounding of any like it or using it for any common purpose

was forbidden under penalty of death;—the *Prophets*, as in the instance of Elisha to succeed to Elijah (1 Kings xix. 16);—and *Kings*, as in two instances in the same chapter (ver. 15), Hazael and Jehu; and, previously, the anointing of Saul and David by Samuel, &c. Now, What, let us inquire, was the import or signification of this rite in these instances? for so we shall see what constituted its fulfilment in their Antitype.

To every Office there are two principal and indispensable requisites (that is, to its due discharge or administration), namely, an authoritative *Appointment* or *Commission*, under which it is held, and the corresponding *Qualification* for its exercise: and both these the anointing of oil implied.

1. It implied, and was a formal declaration, that the anointed person was set apart to his office by the appointment of God and had a commission to exercise it as from Him: and this was the primary requisite whether in the case of the Prophet, Priest, or King:—that the Prophet should speak and teach as from God; that the Priest should be “called of God,” as one “ordained for men in things pertaining to God;” that the King should rule by and for God whose is all Power and Dominion. And so when H^e came who should unite all three in Himself it was necessary that He should be manifested to be “The Lord’s

Anointed"—the Title under which He had been promised from the beginning—"THE MESSIAH" which being interpreted is "THE ANOINTED ONE," the meaning also of the name "CHRIST:" "Jesus Christ," "The Anointed Saviour"—the Saviour sent, and commissioned or appointed, by God.

But *How* and *When* was this?—a question which, often as they name the name of "Christ," many have never considered, important though it be; but to which the Scriptures, as might be expected, give a clear and definite answer:—that He was anointed, not with oil but with that of which it was the emblem and from which it derived its sacredness, even with the Holy Spirit of God. As for example, in the well known Prophecy of Isaiah lxist. chap. and 1st. verse, quoted and applied to Himself by the Saviour in the ivth. of St. Luke, the 16th. and following verses, where we read that "He came to Nazareth, where he "had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he "went into the synagogue on the sabbath-day, and "stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto "him the book of the prophet Esaias: and when he "had opened the book, he found the place where it "was written, The Spirit of the LORD is upon me, "because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel "to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and

“recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty
 “them that are bruised; to preach the acceptable
 “year of the LORD.”

This Passage we shall have occasion again to notice, and therefore here I shall only observe that it is remarkable as recording our Lord’s first public announcement of Himself as “The Messiah” or “The Christ:” and accordingly we find that together with His Mission it declares His anointing thereto, —“He hath *anointed me* to preach the Gospel to the “poor; He hath *sent me* to heal the broken-hearted “&c.” And wherewith “anointed?” With “the Spirit of Jehovah;” (Heb.)—“*The Spirit of JEHOVAH* is upon me because He hath *anointed me*:” as also the Apostle Peter says, Acts x. 38,—“How “God *anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy “Ghost and with power.*” . . .

And *when* this was is equally plain: that it was at His Baptism when the Spirit of God was seen to descend upon Him, and at the same time the voice from Heaven interpreted the fact, saying, “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased:” that is to say—‘This is the Saviour of My appointment, who shall fulfil all my purposes and do all my pleasure, and before whom all Types give way.’ In accordance with which it should be observed that it was immediately after His Baptism, as it was also

with manifest allusion to it, in His first recorded discourse, that He made the application of the Prophecy above quoted from the ivth. of St. Luke, as a reference to the context will show : (Compare ver. 14 with 1, and chap. iii. 22.)

2. Again—In addition to this *consecration*, or *appointment* as from God, the “anointing” in all the fore-mentioned types denoted *qualification*; and this, (it is especially to be noted), in their cases *imparted*. Like Circumcision, and the many ceremonial “washings” or “Baptisms” of the Law, to which we may add the Baptism of John itself, it was indeed rather the witness to a need than the actual supplying of it: but this it did witness distinctly—that man was in himself unfit to discharge, unequal to sustain, the office typically conferred on him: and that the sufficiency must be of God—by the superadding and communicating of a grace of which the holy anointing oil was the adopted and fitting emblem. And so in the Baptism of Jesus, where the need was supplied and the antitype revealed, it was manifestly declared that it was not in the power of flesh and blood that He was about to enter on the work which He had undertaken for man, but in the power of a *spiritually endowed humanity*; not only a humanity in itself pure and ‘without spot of sin,’ (as was His), but endowed moreover with the Holy Spirit of God—a quali-

fication not, as in the instance of His Types, then imparted to Him, being inherently His even from His Birth; but visibly revealed and set forth at His Baptism, when thus evidently, and before many witnesses, the Spirit was given Him by the Father without measure. (John iii. 34.)

Of which also—of this the design and object of this Gift—we have proof in the first act recorded of Him after His Baptism and the first act of our redemption, namely, His Temptation, in the verse next following our Text—"Then was Jesus *led up of the Spirit* into the wilderness to be tempted of the Devil:" or, as in St. Mark's account, chap. i. 12, "And immediately" (immediately after His Baptism) "*the Spirit driveth Him* into the wilderness" . . . ; or, more expressly still, in the words of the parallel place in St. Luke (iv. 1,)—"And Jesus *being full of the Holy Ghost* returned from Jordan, and *was led by the Spirit* into the wilderness, being forty days tempted of the Devil:" and again, the temptation over,—“And Jesus returned *in the power of the Spirit* into Galilee.” The consideration of this event—the Temptation—is also reserved for another opportunity: but here it is referred to only in its connexion with that before us, as showing in what power and capacity it was that He who then encountered the great enemy of Man endured and overcame;

that it was not in the strength of the human nature; for then would he have entered upon the conflict at a disadvantage as compared with the First Adam in whom that nature had proved weak: inasmuch as, though possessing that nature as pure as when first created, He had taken it with the "infirmities" ("the weaknesses"¹) which sin had wrought in it—the consequences of the disease without the disease itself. Nor was it in the power of His original, pre-existent, and essential Divinity; for, (besides that it were little, if any thing, short of blasphemy to represent the Deity in conflict with a creature), then would the conflict and victory not have availed us. No: it is a truth which the verity of His humiliation requires us to believe—that in all that the Redeemer did as man for man, whether in obeying or suffering, He availed not Himself of His Divine Power; having, in the language of Scripture, ("though he was in the form of God and thought it not robbery to be equal with God") "emptied Himself,"²—of His Pre-existent Power as well as of His Glory—that He might truly suffer and undertake for us. But, as already said, it was *as the Spiritual Man*, and in a power and strength which He made His that He might make it ours—by which He might, on the one hand, qualify to be our atonement by

¹ *ἀσθενείας* Heb. iv. 15.

² *ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν*—Phil. ii. 7.

fulfilling all righteousness in our nature, (as the Apostle, speaking of the sacrifice of Christ, says, Heb. ix. 14, "who *through the eternal Spirit* offered Himself without spot to God"): and, on the other, not only overcome for us but enable us to overcome in and through Him. And this leads us to notice,—

II. In the next place—the bearing of this Event before us, the Baptism of the Redeemer, on those who believe in Him and are baptized in His name.

In a word, then, we see here the provision made, in Jesus as "The Christ" or "Anointed One," for the two great wants of Man and two great blessings of the Gospel, his *Justification* and *Regeneration*. These indeed had been already indicated as the two results to us of His Circumcision, (as was observed in treating of that Event); not so much, however, its manifested results as its import interpreted in the light of this Ordinance which is its perfection—the substance of the type, as it is also its substitute. But *here* was supplied the want of which, as then said, it had so long witnessed; *here* the source of both blessings was visibly revealed:—

1. Of Man's *Justification*, as proclaimed by the voice from Heaven—"This is my beloved Son *in whom I am well pleased.*" For, Of whom did the Father say this? Of Christ in what capacity? Not

of the Son as to His Divine and pre-existent Nature, for in that character He needed not this attestation; but, as the occasion proves, of "THE CHRIST"—of the Son of God in the character in which He then appeared, and with reference to the work He was then undertaking. And thus it was in fact to proclaim—"This is my beloved Son in whom (*as Saviour*) "I am well pleased:" "well pleased (as the Prophecy had said) for His righteousness' sake," as He who should, not only obey the Law which man had broken, but, by His condescension in taking the form of a Servant and being made under it, "magnify the Law and make it honourable:" and then offer that Sacrifice which alone could satisfy the ends of the Divine Justice.

May we all have grace to hear that Voice effectually, and, rejecting every confidence in the flesh, to trust only in that Saviour whom "God the Father has (thus) sealed!"

2. But a greater blessing than this was here provided, of which also the Saviour by His anointing is declared to be the Author; for, then was it declared that He it was who should "baptize with the Holy Ghost," as we learn on the testimony of His forerunner who had announced His coming in that character: John i. 32, 33—"And John bare record,

“saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like
“a dove, and it abode upon Him. And I knew Him
“not: but He that sent me to baptize with water,
“the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see
“the Spirit descending and remaining on Him, the
“same is He which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.”
For, What is the Baptism with the Holy Ghost? It
is Baptism with a promise which that of John had not.
It is Baptism, not only as ‘an outward visible sign,’
but, with ‘an inward spiritual grace,’ and that grace an
actual ‘new birth’ to a new and spiritual Life. It is
Christian Baptism with its promise and grace—the
promise and grace of *Regeneration*: the Baptism of
Christ by which is ministered the grace to each of
His members of which the fulness is in Him. It is
“the precious ointment upon the Head” of the
High-Priest, “which went down to the skirts
of his clothing:” the “unction from the Holy
One” of which the beloved disciple speaks (1 John
i. 20)—“the *anointing* which (saith he) ye have
“received of Him and which *abideth in you*.”

Are these things so, my Brethren? Is this the
import of the Name we bear—*Christians*? Anointed
with the anointing, baptized with the baptism of
Christ? Then, “What manner of persons ought we
to be in all holy conversation and godliness!” Are
these our privileges? Is there indeed given us, not

only justification and acceptance through the blood of Christ, but, the Spirit of the Son making us sons? Then, How does the exhortation of the Apostle appeal to us in reference to this same grace—"Having "therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us "cleanse ourselves from all defilement of the flesh, "perfecting the holiness of the Spirit in the fear of "God." (2 Cor. vii. 1, *Gr.*)

May it be so with us! May we be enabled to walk worthy of this our high vocation of God in Christ Jesus! And to this end let us pray—often and fervently—for that gift which He has specially promised to them that ask it, as though comprising all gifts in one: that, in the words of our Church, 'God, 'who has given us His only-begotten Son to take 'our nature upon Him and *to be born* of a pure virgin, would grant that we, being' (in Baptism and by the power of that Spirit by which His humanity was conceived holy and without sin) '*regenerate* and 'made His children by adoption and grace, may daily 'be renewed by His Holy Spirit; through our Lord 'Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with the 'Father and the same Spirit, ever One God, world 'without end. Amen.

THE LIFE OF CHRIST.

VII.—HIS TEMPTATION.

ST. MATT. iv. 1—11.

“Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the Devil. And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He was afterward an hungered. And when the tempter came to Him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But He answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Then the Devil taketh Him up into the holy city, and setteth Him on a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto Him, If thou be the Son God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning Thee; and in their hands they shall bear Thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Again, the Devil taketh Him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and saith unto Him, All these things will I give Thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Then the Devil leaveth Him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto Him.”

IN the last Discourse the connection was noticed between the Event which is the subject of this Section

and that then considered—The Baptism of Christ recorded in the verses immediately preceding: a connexion most material to a right apprehension of this His Temptation and its results, inasmuch as it tells us what was the character in which He entered on this conflict, and what the power by which He triumphed—that it was as “The Christ of God,” or “The Lord’s Anointed” sent on the great Mission of Man’s Redemption, as proclaimed at His Baptism; and in the power of the Spirit which was then seen to descend on Him: confirmed (as then remarked) by the opening words of the Narrative here—“*Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted . . .*” and the parallel place in St. Luke (chap. iv. ver. 1.)—“And Jesus, being *full of the Holy Ghost*, returned from Jordan, and was led “by the Spirit into the wilderness:”—by which He not only overcame for us but provided for our overcoming in and through Him, by participation of the same power.

In this twofold aspect, then, we are to contemplate Jesus tempted—First, as our REDEEMER; and Secondly, as our EXAMPLE.

First—It was needful, in the purpose of our Redemption,—in order to declare the justice and righteousness of God in it—that He, who as “the second

Adam" undertook to be the New Head and Restorer of our race should be "tried" as was the first, (for this is the meaning of the word "tempted"); should be "*proved*" to show that He was without sin, and that Satan, who by man's fall had obtained a rightful power over man and the world, "had nothing in Him" who was now manifested to establish anew man's title and so to wrest from the Enemy both his right and power; whence it was that the Son of God, having first condescended to be made man, next submitted to be thus assailed by the Evil One. The most momentous conflict ever witnessed on the theatre of this world, whether we regard the parties engaged or the result: the parties,—on the one hand, "the Son of God" come down from heaven to espouse Man's cause and interpose for his deliverance; and, on the other, that great Enemy of Man whose dread pre-eminence has acquired for him in Scripture the titles of "Prince of the power of the air" and "the Ruler of the darkness of this age:" and the result—not as in earthly conflicts, where at most this mortal life is at stake; but, far more momentous, involving as it did the destinies—the eternal destinies—of all mankind!

The Temptation is threefold, presenting (as we shall see) three distinct modes of assault, each displaying in an eminent degree the subtilty of the Tempter:—and,

I. First, "When the Tempter came to Him he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread."

The preceding verse had stated that "when He had fasted forty days and forty nights he was afterward an hungered:" illustrating a remark also made in the last Discourse—that the Second Adam entered on this conflict at a disadvantage as compared with the First; for Adam was tempted in the strength of the flesh, in the perfection of the human nature as created; but Christ in the weakness of the flesh—having taken its "infirmities" (a word strictly denoting the *weakness* of the body reduced by sickness after the disease has left) with "the feeling" of which, we are told, He "was touched" or "sympathized," though "without," or "apart from, sin." (Heb. iv. 15). Over and above which He here renders Himself yet weaker by fasting, that it might be the more evident that His strength was not in the flesh but in the Spirit.

The power of Satan, however, is only over or through the flesh; and therefore, knowing there was in Him who then stood before him no sin or sinful propensity to work on, (else it is certain that he would have availed himself of it), he avails himself of the "infirmity" then especially pressing; and, recalling to Him the testimony to His Divine nature but just

borne from heaven at His Baptism, tempts Him to assert it in order to satisfy His hunger :—“ *If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.*” But, as the Apostle writes Heb. v. 8,—“ Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered ; and being made perfect” (i.e. having perfectly qualified as man’s Redeemer) “ He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him.” In the fulness of His love to man, He had vouchsafed to “ take upon Him the form of a servant in being made* in the likeness of men,” that by His obedience in the human nature He might justify and reconcile it : and from this purpose He was not to be diverted, but persevered in it even to the end, when, in the hour of death, we find Him still proof against this same temptation in the mouth of the Tempter’s agents—“ If thou be the Son of God, save thyself and come down from the cross.”

Accordingly, in His answer He takes the ground of the Son of Man, not of the Son of God ; and asserts that principle which is the condition and standing of a perfect Man, as being the principle of complete submission to the will of God—namely FAITH : “ But He answered and said, It is written, “ Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every

* This is the force of the Original, Phil. ii. 7.

“word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God :”—the standing in which Man was originally created and from which he fell. For Adam fell by *unbelief*; by entertaining a doubt of the truth of that which God had said, and acting for himself, instead of continuing to depend on and live by His Word alone. And as by Faith he lived, so now by Faith he is saved and justified: *this* “the shield,” and the Word of God “the sword,” which his Saviour and justifier—“the Captain of our salvation”—opposes to the first assault of the Wicked One, and with which He defeats him.

II. “Then, (proceeds the Narrative), the Devil taketh “Him up into the holy city, and setteth Him “on a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto Him, If “thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it “is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee; and in their hands they shall bear “thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against “a stone.”

It were natural to conclude that where Satan could find no *evil* to work on, and failed in an attempt directed against *infirmity* in the most extreme degree of it, his power was at an end. But this Narrative teaches us—what all who “are not ignorant of his devices” have experienced—that he can tempt even

by means of the highest and holiest principles: of which we have several instances in Scripture. Thus Moses was tempted to offend through zeal at Meribah in striking the rock to bring forth water from it, instead of "speaking to it" as commanded; by which act he exalted himself and Aaron in the eyes of the people rather than the Lord whose ministers they were. And again, Job—that eminent servant of God—who was enabled to "hold fast his integrity," and under accumulated trials and provocations refrained from rebelling against the Lord's dealings, was in the end tempted by that very integrity to the sin of self-righteousness and boasting, for which it became necessary that he should be humbled and brought to a knowledge of himself: (ch. xlii. 5, 6.)

And so here, Satan having failed to tempt Christ by the infirmity or weakness of the flesh, owing to His taking His stand upon that which is the strength and life of Man—even FAITH, now seeks to tempt Him on this ground and by that very Faith. As though he had said—'If then "Man shall live by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God," afford an example of this Faith and a proof of the truth of that Word of God, in the instance of one of its plainest promises of preservation to the man who putteth his trust in Him; for which, moreover, the place is well adapted—the holy city

‘and pinnacle of the Temple—since the effect of so stupendous a miracle on the crowds who shall witness it will be the ready acknowledgment that you are indeed the expected Messiah, to whom this promise has been always specially applied.’

But “Jesus said unto him, It is written again, “Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God;” that is, “Thou shalt not *put to the proof* the Lord thy God;” not, as often explained, a command to Satan to desist from tempting Him, (for it was needful, as before said, that He should go through this Temptation and He had volunteered to submit to it); but another command of which, as Son of Man, He himself thus acknowledges the obligation: confirmed by the occasion to which the precept refers in the place whence quoted, Deut. vi. 16, and the illustration of it there given: “Ye shall not tempt the Lord your God, *as ye tempted Him in Massah*.”—and thus a further exemplification of the principle of Faith, and, as of Faith, of Righteousness: waiting in patient submission the Lord’s will, and not anticipating the accomplishment, in His own time and in His own way, of His promises or purposes.

III. Defeated in these attempts to divert the Saviour from the path of that obedience which He had volunteered, the Tempter once more changes his

ground. "Again" (we read, ver. 8,) "the Devil "taketh Him up into an exceeding high mountain, "and sheweth Him all the kingdoms of the world, "and the glory of them; and saith unto Him, All "these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down "and worship me."

A very usual Comment represents this to be a temptation addressed to the feeling of worldly ambition. But this is to say that it was not only the weakest of all the temptations—where we would expect the strongest—but that it was in fact no temptation at all; inasmuch as in the Saviour worldly ambition (being a sinful passion) could have had no place. And this the Tempter knew, as already proved by his former assaults. But he knew, also, that the Scriptures of the Prophets had promised to the Messiah as the travail of His soul that which he here offers Him—the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them: that, as Man's Deliverer, He must propose to Himself the recovery of the Dominion originally conferred on Man and the redemption of his lost inheritance. It is then by an object, not of *worldly*, but, of *holy ambition* that he here tempts Him: and the temptation consisted in this—the offer, (and, be it observed, it was no vain offer of that which he had not power to give; for, as he adds in the parallel place of St. Luke's narrative, "that is

delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will I give it:" else again, as on the supposition of an appeal to worldly ambition which had no place in our Lord, there would be here no temptation. But temptation, we may be assured, there was; and it consisted in this)—the offer of this kingdom and glory on other terms than those on which it was promised; by avoiding, namely, the Cross by which alone the title to it could be re-established, and putting from Him the cup which the Father had given Him to drink: and more,—the acknowledging, by acquiescing in his terms, of that power of Satan in the world which he obtained by the enslaving of Man; and thus, in fact, the service and worship of him as its God and Prince, and the abjuration of the service and worship of the only true God. Here the design of the Tempter and his wickedness is undisguised, and according is the answer of Jesus—"Then saith Jesus "unto him, Get thee hence Satan: for it is written, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and Him "only shalt thou serve." And "*then*" (it is added) "the Devil leaveth Him. . . ." He withdraws discomfited and defeated, leaving complete the evidence of the righteousness of Jesus as Son of Man, and with it the evidence of our Justification in Him:—the proof that in the Second Adam One has been found able to stand where the First had fallen, and there-

fore entitled to recover and to claim his forfeited blessings—the proof, in a word, that “JESUS” is that which His name imports and which His anointing proclaimed Him, “THE SAVIOUR.”

But it was observed that in this Narrative we contemplate Jesus not only as our *Saviour* but our *Example*. On this part of the subject, however, time will not now suffice to enter, and therefore, reserving it for another opportunity, I will only in conclusion add a few words in the way of reflection on the Truth thus far developed.

(1) Let us then adore, while we wonder at, the great Love of Christ and the ineffable Mystery of His Humiliation here revealed: that He “who was in the beginning with God and was God” should lay aside His glory—“the glory which He had with the Father before the world was”—and, not only for us men and for our Salvation be made Man, but, submit thus to the assaults and temptation of that Wicked One whom with a word—“with the breath of His mouth”—he could have destroyed! But the triumph on which our redemption was suspended was not to be the triumph of *power* but the triumph of *righteousness*; and therefore did our Surety thus humble Himself: so humble Himself that He who is the Lord of angels was “ministered to” by them;

III. Again and lastly, Jesus is our Example in His Temptation in the *means* by which He resisted and overcame the Devil, namely, by The Word of God as contained in The Holy Scriptures. This was His answer to each insinuation of the Tempter—"It is written"—"*It is written again.*" And Why this? Why should "He who spake as never man spake," who was Himself "The Word" and possessed without measure the Spirit by which it was indited,—Why should He limit himself to the Scriptures, and to the Scriptures—the imperfect Revelation—of the Old Testament? He who is the Author of the New? There are two answers to this question, corresponding to the twofold aspect in which we here behold Him. He did so, first, that as Son of Man, in the form of a servant for the effecting of our justification, He might shew His submission to the Law under which He vouchsafed to be made for us—that it was His Guide and Rule, the righteousness of which He came to fulfil. But He did so with yet another purpose—that He might here again be as we are: availing Himself of the same means of resisting Temptation as should be available to those whom He endues with His Spirit and strengthens with His strength. And What a motive here for studying the Holy Scriptures! Of what vast importance to us not only to hear them with attention, but to 'read, mark, learn,

and inwardly digest them,' seeing they thus furnish the chief weapon of our warfare, "the sword of the Spirit," without which, therefore, we are defenceless! For example, many there are who but for their having been rendered thus conspicuous would not have been aware of—and even now, I fear, unless directed by the marginal references, would be unable to say whence our Lord took those passages by which He replied to these several temptations: and, How shall they be prepared to resist the assaults of that Tempter, who, as we here see, can himself search the Scriptures to find arguments wherewith to deceive? how be enabled with our Lord to answer to each passage he may thus pervert, "It is written again?"

In Conclusion—Are we walking and living so as *to need* and *to have* the sympathy of Christ in our Temptations, that is, "walking in the Spirit?" For, (be it again distinctly stated), with those who "walk after the flesh" or with the temptations to evil from its sinful desires, He neither has nor can have any sympathy. And, What a fearful thought—to walk through this world, exposed to all the power and all the assaults of that Wicked One who is its God and Prince, without the sympathy of Christ! But, Are we following His steps and making common cause with Him as His faithful subjects and servants? *Then* have we both His sympathy and succour; and

this in every trial: for "He was tempted (*or* tried) in all points as we are"—not as *men* are, but "*as we are*;" as the believing and the spiritual: and therefore, as the Apostle exhorts, "Let us go boldly "to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy" (through His Cross) "and find grace to help in every "time of need" (through His sympathy with our infirmities); in the review of this and the foregoing events of His history and of the benefits we derive from each, taking up the petitions of our Liturgy, and saying—with, I trust, an enlarged sense of their import—

‘By the Mystery of Thy holy Incarnation:

‘By Thy holy Nativity, and Circumcision:

‘By Thy Baptism, Fasting, and Temptation,

GOOD LORD DELIVER US.’

THE LIFE OF CHRIST.

IX.—HE DECLARES HIS MISSION.

ST. LUKE iv. 16—21.

“And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up: and, as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the sabbath-day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto Him the book of the prophet Esaias: and when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised; to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And He closed the book, and He gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on Him. And He began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.”

THIS passage, (as was observed on a recent occasion), is remarkable as the record of our Lord's first public announcement of Himself as “THE MESSIAH” or “CHRIST,” that is, “THE ANOINTED of Jehovah:” and also for the plain and full exposition it affords of that Title in the Prophecy here quoted and applied by Him—both of *the means whereby* and *the end for*

which He was so anointed. The former of these—the means whereby “The Christ” was anointed—we then considered, namely, as here stated, by “the Spirit of Jehovah;” the antitype of that holy oil wherewith His types, the Prophets, Priests, and Kings of old, had been consecrated to their offices; which event, moreover we saw, occurred on the occasion of His Baptism when, as we read in the preceding chapter, iii. ver. 22, “The Holy Ghost “descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon Him, “and a voice came from heaven which said, Thou “art my beloved Son; in thee I am well-pleased:” whereby the seal of God was formally and visibly set to His appointment as Saviour, and to the Mission on which He came into the world.

But the *end* for which He was so manifested as “The Christ of God”—the *objects* or *purposes* of His Mission so accredited,—are not less necessary to be apprehended by us if we would see the full import of this His Title and Office: and these it is now proposed to notice as enumerated in this same Prophecy, which may be regarded as a summary of His Ministry and of that large portion of His history which in the present Series it were impossible to treat more in detail.

To proceed then,—We have here a catalogue of miseries and mercies of which it is difficult to say whether it sets forth most fully the wretchedness of

fallen man, or the value, sufficiency, and love of Him who undertakes to relieve it. And,—

I. First,—“He hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor.”

“Poor” all men are by nature, as having forfeited the inheritance to which man was originally heir—the children, as it were, of a bankrupt, without any real good in present possession, and without a hope for the future. But the Scriptures by the term intend rather those that feel and acknowledge themselves “poor” than those that are so. For of too many it may be said, in the words of the rebuke to the Church of Laodicea, that they imagine themselves “rich and increased with goods and having need of nothing : and know not that they are wretched, and “miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” They are unconscious of spiritual destitution—of their want of eternal life owing to sin of which the wages is death : and, it may be “having,” or at least seeking, “their portion in this life,” care for nothing beyond it. For which reason in other parallel passages we find the expression “poor in spirit” for “poor ;” as in Matt. v. 3, “Blessed are the *poor in spirit*, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven ;” which in Luke vi. 20, is simply “Blessed be ye *poor* :” and so in the original of this Prophecy, Isa. lxi. 1, the

word also means, as we have there rendered it, "meek"—humbled in heart and soul; lowly, not only in fact but, in their own eyes. Not however therefore excluding, but, on the contrary, specially including the literally "poor" in this world's goods—who, for example, are undoubtedly intended Matt. xi. 5, when our Lord says, "*the poor* have the gospel preached to them:" and again in St. James ii. 5, "Hath not God chosen *the poor* of this world rich in "faith and heirs of the kingdom which He hath "promised to them that love Him?" because such poverty of circumstances has the advantage and the blessing—(Would that the poor generally felt it!)—of conducing to "poverty of spirit," to humility and dependence upon God, and the desire of something beyond this life.

To such the Messiah is anointed "to preach the gospel"—"to preach good tidings," as we render more literally in Isaiah: even that, as we have just heard, though poor in this world's goods they may be heirs of a "kingdom"—"the kingdom of heaven:" through Him who in His own person, as the Son of Man, has established the title to all that Man had lost; and more—as the Son of God, who "came down from heaven," is able to make us sons of God; and to bestow on us, in addition to the earthly, all heavenly blessings.

II. "He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted."

Here, again, as the misery is undefined so is the mercy; which we must not therefore limit, but leave the consolation, as we find it, to all whom the pressure of sorrow and affliction weighs down—the broken of heart from whatever cause. Yet there cannot be a doubt that there is specially intended that "broken and contrite heart" which we are told "God will not despise," to which He ever has regard,—broken and sorrowful because of sin: though, as sin is the parent of all sorrow, all is included. And so that Prayer in our Service which supplicates God as our 'Merciful Father, that despiseth not the sighing of a *contrite heart* nor the desire of such as be *sorrowful*' prays Him 'mercifully to assist our prayers that we make before Him in *ALL our troubles and adversities* whensoever they oppress us;' the design of those troubles and adversities, and their effect when rightly used, being to humble and break the proud spirit of man, and so to produce contrition for sin and that "godly sorrow which worketh repentance not to be repented of." And when this is so, He that heals the one wound heals all: He that soothes this sorrow soothes the others. He in the first instance heals the heart broken by reason of sin, speaking that "peace" which He has "made by the blood of His cross," and the reconciliation to God

effected by His perfect atonement for sin: and, this burden removed, all other care is light. For the heart at peace with God can bear up under any thing: and, Would that every child of affliction, all the broken of heart, knew this: that they might in their trouble, whatever it be, "turn to Him that smiteth them," who "woundeth and His hands make whole;" and seek health and cure from Him whom (as here declared) He hath "anointed" and "sent" for this very purpose,—who was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" that He might "bear *our* griefs and carry *our* sorrows!"

III. "To preach deliverance to the captives . . . to set at liberty them that are bruised:" for so these clauses may be connected, as in Isaiah—"to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to them that are bound."

This case might at first view seem to be an exception to the others in this passage so far considered, in that it can only be understood literally and its application must be limited to the actual victims of earthly tyranny and oppression. But our Lord himself has taught us that the words admit of another and far more comprehensive meaning; and an application, if not wider, as wide as the cases of either "the poor" or "broken-hearted:" when, (as we read

St. John viii. 31, 32), He addressed to certain Jews who believed on Him those memorable words,—“If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples “indeed ; and ye shall know the Truth, *and the Truth shall make you free.*” Many doubtless there are now,—some, it may be, among ourselves—who, with the by-standing Jews on that occasion, seeing the drift of that saying and what it implies, will be ready to answer “We were never in bondage to any man : How sayest thou, Ye shall be made free ?” But mark our Lord’s reply : “Jesus answered them, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, whosoever committeth sin is the servant” (literally “*the slave*”) of “sin.” And who then can say they are not captives ? Who can boast that they are free ? None, except those who have been set free by Him who has been sent “to proclaim deliverance to the captives ;” as He adds in the same context just referred to—“If the Son therefore shall make you free ye shall be free indeed.” He who in His death and resurrection triumphed over Man’s enemy in his stronghold, and in His ascension led captivity’s-self captive : and at whose voice now, as “The Captain of our Salvation” calling us to follow Him, each feels his chains fall off from him, like Peter at the bidding of the angel ; inspired with a new power—animated with new hopes—quickened with a new life ; and

ready to exclaim with the Psalmist, "I will run the way of Thy commandments now that Thou hast enlarged—(hast emancipated or set free) my heart." (Ps. cxix. 32. *Heb*).

IV. "And recovering of sight to the blind."

This was literally fulfilled, as we know, in many instances in the history of our Lord's Mission, and is one of the facts to which He refers the messengers of the Baptist for proof that He was indeed "He who should come," Matt. xi. 4—6; "Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see; the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me." But here, again, the context seems to determine us to another interpretation and to require that we should understand in another sense this blindness—namely, as another emblem of man's moral destitution and the misery of his natural state; for which the remedy is again to be found in Him who proclaimed Himself to be "The Light of the World," as revealing the knowledge of "the true God"—of God as He is in truth, and with it the knowledge of salvation and eternal life: as it is written, chap. i. of this gospel, ver. 78, 79, "Through

"the tender mercy of our God, whereby the day-spring from on high hath visited us; to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet unto the way of peace:" that is, "To give knowledge of salvation unto His people by the remission of their sins," as the imagery is explained ver. 77. And again 2 Cor. iv. 6, "God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

At this Truth also the Jews were offended, saying to Jesus—"Are we blind also?" when He said that He was "come into the world that they which see not might see." But, well had it been for them if, instead of in pride of heart saying "We see," they had acknowledged their blindness and prayed of Him "the recovering of sight to the blind" which in fulfilment of this Prophecy He bestows.

V. And last—"To preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

Very brief and superficial has been unavoidably my notice of these gracious objects of the Mission of "The Christ," each of which would have afforded abundant matter for a separate Discourse such as this: and now, of this, not the least full and rich of

them, I can only say that it is a manifest allusion to "The Year of Jubilee" the ordinance respecting which is found in Lev. xxv. 8—10, when they were to "proclaim liberty throughout the land unto all the inhabitants thereof;" and this moreover "on the day of atonement," a Type, though not fully, yet in a principal part, realized in the "reconciliation" effected by Christ and revealed in the Gospel. In accordance with which, (though in reference to another Prophecy of this Prophet chap. xlix. 8), the Apostle calls this dispensation "The accepted time" and "The Day of Salvation;" as we read in 2 Cor. vi. 1, 2, where, having stated that "God was in Christ reconciling" "the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses" "unto them," he adds—"We then as workers" "together with Him beseech you also that ye receive" "not the grace of God in vain. For He saith I have" "heard Thee in a time accepted and in the day of" "Salvation have I succoured Thee: behold, now is" "the accepted time; behold, now is the day of Salva-
"tion."

Thus far the Saviour quoted from the Prophet and closed the Book; adding, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears." And Wherefore closed He the Book here? Is it that here ended the enumeration of the various purposes for which He was "anointed?" No: for if we turn to the Prophecy

quoted (Isa. lxi. 1—3) we find others added ; and without the intervention of a period in the sentence, and scarcely of a comma—the next being prefixed with the conjunction “and :”—“To proclaim the “acceptable year of the Lord, AND the day of vengeance of our God ; to comfort all that mourn ; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness ; that they might be called Trees of righteousness, The planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified.” Wherefore then closed He the Prophet so abruptly ? Because then was so much only fulfilled as He quoted. And so much is yet being fulfilled in this the day of grace, “the accepted time” and “day of Salvation” still in mercy prolonged to the world. Which ended, the thread of the Prophecy so broken off will be again taken up, and the Messiah “will appear the second time,” and “unto Salvation” but in another sense—to avenge and to glorify His people, as the sequel states.

When also the Prophecy shall be fulfilled—from the beginning and throughout—to that people to whom it primarily applies and whose circumstances shall realize most literally its several conditions—God’s ancient people Israel : who shall then be “mourners in Zion” literally, and for His sake whom

they have pierced ; as, among other places, is clearly predicted in the Prophet Zechariah, chap. xii. ver. 10 and following : and when they, in common with all who in that day shall remain faithful of Gentile Christendom, shall also be sufferers for His name ; “mourners” in another sense—and “poor,”—and “broken-hearted,”—and “captives”—and “bruised” or “oppressed” under the tyranny of their last enemy and the last great Persecutor of the Church ; who, (as his name imports—“The Antichrist” or “Anti-Messiah”) will aim, in his opposition to the kingdom of “The Christ” or “The Messiah,” to obliterate the name of Christian, and with it also the name of Jew.*

Into this prospect we cannot now go farther : and

* Many other instances might be adduced of Prophecies having a double fulfilment, and especially of those which, like this, embrace in unbroken connexion the First and Second Advents of Christ ; and this because, before the event, His coming was regarded as *one*: not (as sometimes explained by allusion to natural vision) for the same reason that objects really distinct seem at a great distance to be united ; for this imperfection could not apply to Prophetic vision which is the inspiration of the Almighty : but because the intervening Dispensation was a mystery not then made known : embracing—(as mentioned when considering the Song of Simeon in which also both Advents are similarly united)—the blindness which has happened to Israel and also the calling of the elect Church of the Gentiles ; and forming, as it were, a Parenthesis in these Prophecies as they now read.

therefore—closing the book where our Lord closed it—I will only add my earnest prayer that we may all experience largely in their *spiritual* sense, the blessings of which *to us* He is here declared to be at present the author: the joy, the health, the liberty, the light, the grace, and peace, which He is here “anointed” and sent to impart: and hereafter, when He is revealed for its final accomplishment, may have the yet fuller experience of the promise in that blissful state of which it is written in a parallel Prophecy of the New Testament “Behold, the “tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell “with them, and they shall be His people, and God “Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And “God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and “there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor “crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for “the former things are passed away.”

THE LIFE OF CHRIST.

HIS TRANSFIGURATION.

ST. MATT. xvii. 1—5.

“ And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them: and His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with Him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye Him.”

It has been already observed that, though the Life of our Lord on earth was one of humiliation and suffering, there were occasional attestations given to His real dignity and proper glory: one instance of which we have seen in His Epiphany soon after His birth; and another is here recorded—His Transfiguration, at an advanced period of His Mission, to which I now pass as the next of the Events in His history which may be considered more peculiarly to affect Himself personally.

Let us first inquire into the import of this wonderful transaction, and afterwards into its practical bearing on ourselves and the instruction to be derived from it.

I. As to the import of a Vision so mysterious it might seem at first view that all that could be known of it is that it was designed to exhibit to view the glorified person of the Redeemer as He should be, His humiliation ended, after His ascension; and as He subsequently appeared to Saul on the road to Damascus and to the beloved disciple at Patmos: to furnish an additional attestation, with these, of His glory as at once "Son of God" and "Son of Man." But, on considering it more attentively, we find that we have much more defined and precise information afforded us as to its design and object; first, by our Lord Himself, and afterwards by one of the three favoured witnesses.

1. And first, our Lord had plainly intimated to the disciples what it was they were about to witness, when, in the verses next preceding (ch. xvi. 27, 28,) while encouraging them to take up His cross and follow Him, He added—"For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then He shall reward every man according to His works. Verily I say unto you, There be some

“standing here which shall not taste of death till
“they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom:”
where, that He alludes to His Transfiguration to be
witnessed by three of them in a few days after—and
not to His ascension as some Commentators explain;
still less to the destruction of Jerusalem proposed by
others, which, moreover only one of those present
lived to see,—is evident from the fact that these same
words precede the narrative of this Vision in all the
Gospels; though in two of them, here and in St.
Mark (compare chap. viii. last verse, with ix. 1,)
improperly separated from it by the division of the
chapters; which, you need not to be informed, does
not belong to the Original and (though generally
speaking very useful as facilitating reference) may
often be disregarded, as in this instance, with great
advantage to the sense.

“The Son of Man coming in His kingdom,”—
“His appearing and kingdom” (as St. Paul expresses
it 2 Tim. iv. 1); or, in a word, His SECOND ADVENT,
with which His Kingdom is ever connected,—*this*
was the event prefigured by this scene, or rather
foreshown; exhibited, not so much in Type or pat-
tern, as in actual specimen. And this is confirmed
by the inspired comment (as already said) of an eye-
witness, the Apostle Peter, who, speaking of that
“blessed hope,” says in his 2nd Epistle chap. i. 16—

18, "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Observe—"the POWER and COMING," and the "MAJESTY" therewith connected, of our Lord Jesus Christ received (the Apostle states) its corroboration and was witnessed on "the holy mount;" that is evidently the Mount of Transfiguration, as proved by "the voice" from heaven which he quotes, uttered on that occasion. Into the glory of that day the Saviour was for a while transformed; the fashion of it He temporarily assumed; of which the only description comprehensible by us that could be given is, that "His face did shine as the sun and His raiment was white as the Light"—"shining, exceeding white as snow, so as no fuller on earth could white them." (St. Mark ix. 3).

2. "And, behold," (continues the narrative), "there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with Him:" to which St. Luke adds an important circumstance—"who appeared in glory, and spake of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem."

The usual reason assigned for the selection of these two individuals in particular is doubtless a true one—that, the one representing the Law and the other the Prophets, their attendance upon Christ, taken in connexion with the command from Heaven to “hear Him,” would signify most expressively that He had come to fulfil both, and that the Dispensations ministered by them respectively expired with the commencement of the Christian.

But there is another and no less obvious reason, viewing the Vision in the light thrown upon it by its design and purpose as just explained. For, as when “the Son of Man comes in His Kingdom” He will not come alone, but accompanied by the noble army of Martyrs and those His saints “who sleep in Jesus” whom “God shall bring with Him,” who come to “reign with Him” and “appear with Him in glory”—the glory of the resurrection of which they shall then be partakers, their bodies “fashioned like unto His glorious body”—so, in the representation of that Event here given, we find “two men” appear with Him; and in like glory to His, assumed, as was His, for the occasion: “which were Moses and Elias” because they were respectively the representatives of the two classes of saints who come with Him,—Elias of the living who shall be translated or “changed,” and Moses of the dead who shall be

raised.* I say, 'in glory assumed, as was His, for the occasion:' for that they appeared in the body, and as it shall be glorified at the resurrection, is certain; and to say that this was then their proper condition of being would be to contradict the Scripture which says that "Christ should be the first that should rise from the dead" (Acts xxvi. 23): not the first restored to life, which others had been and by Himself; but the first raised in incorruption and in glory—in the power of that Life of which in His resurrection He was declared to be "the Prince" or "Author."†

3. And lastly,—The Spectators of this glorious scene demand our notice—the three Apostles, whose presence we have heard already accounted for in the words of one of them—that they might be "eye-witnesses of the majesty," and so be competent to certify the Church of "the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. i. 16); to which also another of them, St. John, has been, with much probability, understood to allude when he says (ch. i. 14, of his Gospel)—"The Word was made flesh and dwelt

* That Moses had resumed his body after death would have been antecedently probable from the mysterious language of Deut. xxxiv. 5, 6; especially as compared with the Epistle of St. Jude, ver. 9.

† Acts iii. 15, ἀρχηγός: comp. Heb. ii. 10 and xii. 2, Gr.

"among us, *and we beheld His glory*, the glory as of "the only-begotten of the Father. . . ."

But, though it may not be asserted so positively, there was, we have much ground for concluding, another reason for their presence, which at least it may be permitted to suggest—namely, that they also might bear a part in the Type of the Kingdom; as representatives of those who shall be spectators, and in the flesh as they were, of the glory when revealed. For, that which is written remains to be fulfilled,—
"The glory of the Lord shall be revealed and **ALL FLESH** shall see it together." "Every eye shall see Him:"—some looking on Him with dismay and terror; those on whom He comes to execute judgment; "the Wicked One," and his adherents, "whom the Lord shall consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming:" the ungodly—"those who know not God and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ"—on whom He "shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty "angels in flaming fire taking vengeance." But to others His coming shall have a different aspect and be attended with far different results. To His ancient people Israel, for example, "who shall look on Him whom they have pierced and mourn" mourn then with the gracious sorrow of repentance (Zech. xii. 10): who will then be ready to say, "Lo

"this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His Salvation:" (Isa. xxv. 9). And "the Nations of them which are saved" (saved from the judgments on the anti-Christian) who "shall walk in the light" of that city into which "the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour" and of which "the glory of God" and "the Lamb is the light;" (Rev. xxi. 23, 24.) who shall be admitted to the beatific vision as when of old—in another Type of the same kingdom—"the Lord came down" and held His court on Mount Sinai, surrounded with "myriads of His holy-ones" (not then His saints but angels); "and Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel went up, and saw the God of Israel;" while all the people witnessed the tokens of their God dwelling among and reigning over them. So, says the Prophet Zechariah of that day when "the Lord shall be king over all the earth" . . . "when there shall be one Lord and His name one," . . . "it shall come to pass that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of Tabernacles,"—that joyous feast which, as "the feast of ingathering" or "Harvest," has not yet received its

antitype; (Zech. xiv. 16 with 1—9 &c.): a prophecy which, perhaps, may also explain the remark of St. Peter on the mount of transfiguration—"Lord, "it is good for us to be here: if Thou wilt, let us "make here three *Tabernacles*; one for Thee, and "one for Moses, and one for Elias:"—"not knowing what he said" indeed, in that a specimen only and not the fulfilment was then present; but yet rightly (we may presume) calling to mind the prediction, and recognizing the connexion between it and the scene before him.*

Such is, in outline, the import of this Vision of glory; let us now briefly consider,—

II. In the next place,—The purpose of it, in a

* In connexion with the proof here afforded that the Transfiguration was a foreshewing of that Period of which both Jewish and early Christian writers agree in considering the Sabbath to have been typical—the "SABBATISM" that "remaineth to the people of God," as the Apostle terms it Heb. iv. 9, *Gr.*, and *MILLENNIUM* of the Apocalypse—it is worthy of note that a comparison of the Narratives of the transaction leads to the conclusion that it occurred on the *Sabbath*, i.e. the *Seventh-Day*. For St. Matthew and also St. Mark say, "After six days" from the announcement; and St. Luke, "About an eight-days after:" both of which statements agree with the Seventh being the day of the Event:—that is, after six days interval, and on the Eighth-day inclusive of the day of announcement; which, it is presumed was the Sabbath-day, else the reckoning from it, and of this interval, is without explanation.

practical point of view, as affecting ourselves and all disciples of Christ.

This is distinctly taught us by the same passages which have afforded us the key to its meaning—by the Lord in the context, and by His Apostle. And,

1. First—It will be seen that in the context (and it is the same in all the Gospels) our Lord had been apprizing His disciples of His approaching sufferings and death for the first time. “From that time forth” (we read ver. 21, of the preceding chapter) “began Jesus to shew unto His disciples how that He must go unto Jerusalem and suffer many things of the elders and chief-priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.” This truth, we find, proved a stumbling-block to St. Peter, who had just before confessed Him to be “The Christ, the Son of the living God:” which led our Lord to state the test of true discipleship as at the 24th and following verses: “Then said Jesus unto His disciples, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with

"His angels; and then He shall reward every man according to his works." Here are the difficulties, but here is also the "reward" of following Him: and to assure them and us of this reward He superadds to the *promise* of His Coming and Kingdom a *pledge* in an eye-sight *evidence* of it:—an earnest such as no promise could give, in an actual Vision of the glory of Christ and the appearing in the same glory of two men of like passions with ourselves.

2. And to the same effect St. Peter in the passage already partly quoted from the 1st chap. of his 2d Epistle:—"For we have not followed cunningly devised fables when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were *eye-witnesses* of His Majesty," (referring as he tells us to the Vision in "the holy mount"); to which he adds—"We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day-star arise. . . ." That is, we have a *promise* of the Saviour's coming—we have "the word of prophecy:" but we have that word "*made more sure*," (as the original should be rendered), by the evidence vouchsafed to us the witnesses of His Transfiguration.

In our day, indeed, there is so little suffering for Christ, the cross is comparatively so light, that we

little cherish this "blessed hope" which was the great support of the primitive Church under persecution, and little appreciate the promises and the evidence of it. But it will not always be so. A time is coming when, with the thickening of the darkness round us, the light—"the lamp" of prophecy, of "the word of the kingdom"—will become more precious; with the abounding of unbelief the truth will be more needful to us: when, as the Apostle here says, this hope of the Church will be accounted "a cunningly devised fable;" and, (as he advertises us in the 3rd chapter of this Epistle), "there shall come in the last days scoffers walking after their own lusts and saying, Where is the promise of His "Coming?" when, moreover, the Truth which it is the special object of His second coming to assert—the Kingship and Lordship of Christ,—shall be openly, as already to a fearful extent it is covertly, denied; and the confession of it will again involve the denial of self even to the loss of life for His sake. And *then* will it behove the faithful to "take heed to the word of prophecy" and to the witness by which it is confirmed, and, if not too late, to trim "the lamp" which is well nigh gone out.

But even now, in the absence of persecution, it is good for us to contemplate the Scene; and for this reason—that *the contemplation of glory is the best*

preparation for suffering and best support under it. So it was in the case of Jesus himself. "For the joy "that was set before Him, He endured the cross, "despising the shame. . . ." The subject of converse with Him on the holy mount of Moses and Elias, who appeared with Him in glory, was His approaching sufferings: "They spake of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem." And it was the fitting time and place—while the Type was being exhibited and the pledge given of "the glory that should follow." And so it will be with us. It is in the comparison with "the glory that shall be revealed in us" that "the sufferings of this present time" (whatever they may be) will be found light; as said the Apostle of a time when trials were neither few nor trifling. Let us then cherish this "blessed hope." Descending from Calvary, let us ascend the Mount of Transfiguration, and contemplate the earnest there given of the Redeemer's coming and kingdom; till, filled with the prospect, our souls too could say, "It is good for us to be here." And though our wish be not yet granted us,—though we must not yet build our tabernacles on the mount of beatific vision,—though we must, like the disciples, be left again alone with Jesus in His humiliation, and with Him descend again the mount to encounter the strivings of Satan, and the temptations and trials of

an evil world; yet, will the vision of glory not have been useless. It will refresh us in our pilgrimage; it will raise and keep us above the world; it will strengthen that Faith which is "the evidence of things not seen, the substance of things hoped for;" and sustain in waiting for the promise. It will have raised for a moment the curtain which separates the darkness of this world from the regions of light; and though it fall again, Faith will protract the vision, and leave the believer in possession of an enjoyment that is all but real; that will beguile some of the tedious hours of the night, and "make the darkness light before him."

THE LIFE OF CHRIST.

XI.—HE ENTERS JERUSALEM IN TRIUMPH.

ST. JOHN xii. 12—16.

“On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm-trees, and went forth to meet Him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord. And Jesus, when He had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written, Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass’s colt. These things understood not His disciples at the first; but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of Him, and that they had done these things unto Him.”

THIS Passage records the entrance of the Saviour into Jerusalem for the last time previous to His suffering; which, a comparison with the 1st verse of this chapter informs us, was on the fifth day before His crucifixion, that is, the first day of that eventful week which we term Passion-Week, answering to our Sunday: for it is there said that “six days before the passover” (i.e. before the day of His crucifixion) “He came to Bethany,” and the 12th verse says that “on the next day” this transaction occurred: one of

the instances, it may be remarked, in which the Lord's Day is signalized in the Gospel History, and doubtless with design, preparatory to the ultimate substitution of it for the Sabbath as the Christian Commemoration.

Let us first inquire into the import of the Transaction itself: after which we shall the better perceive its connexion with those events of which it was the precursor.

1. First, then,—That this triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem was intended to be an assertion of His **KINGLY OFFICE** is so obvious as to need no proof; inasmuch as it is expressly stated in the Prophecy in fulfilment of which (we read verses 14, 15,) it was done: "And Jesus, when He had found a young ass, sat thereon: as it is written, Fear not, daughter of Sion; behold, *thy King cometh*, sitting on an ass's colt:"—confirmed by the salutation with which He was welcomed by the multitude, "Hosanna: Blessed is *the King of Israel* that cometh in the name of the Lord" (ver. 13); to which St. Mark's account adds "Blessed be *the Kingdom of our father David* that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest;" (chap. xi. 10). In conformity with which also was the bearing of Palm-branches before Him as before a conqueror; and the selection of "a young ass" or "ass's colt," that is,

one which had never borne the yoke; such animals in Eastern Countries in those times being used for sacred purposes; and the ass in particular (in the East an animal of great beauty) by persons of regal dignity in times of peace, as were horses in war: (Compare 1 Sam. vi. 7, with Judges v. 10).

But while it is thus evident that our Lord meant distinctly to assert for Himself the Title of "KING," and also the application of the Prophecy referred to, it should be carefully noted that He did not mean to convey (as at first view might be supposed, and as the attending multitudes believed—as very many now would be found to maintain,) that His Kingdom was then come or this Prophecy about to be fulfilled in all its parts; it being one thing to assert a *title* to a throne and another to exercise the right and *reign*: and that He only intended the former on this occasion is decided, both by the designation of the kingdom, and the terms of the Prophecy. For, the kingdom assigned to Him is "The Kingdom of Israel"—"The Kingdom of our Father David"—whereat the "Daughter of Zion" is called on to "rejoice:" and it is but too notorious that at this very time the measure of Jerusalem's iniquity was being filled up—"the sceptre" was ready to "depart from Judah"—the city about to be laid in ruins—and the people carried away captive as they still

continue: while the sequel of the Prophecy predicts results from the coming of Zion's King to the world at large which are as far from being realized, even at this date, as those promised to Zion herself. I refer to the 10th verse of the ixth chap. of Zechariah, in its connexion with the 9th which is that quoted by the Evangelist:—"Rejoice greatly" (says verse 9) "O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, thy King cometh unto thee: He is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass:"—in continuation of which adds verse 10,—"And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim" (i.e. Israel), "and the horse from Jerusalem" (i.e. Judah, as distinct from Israel), "and the battle bow shall be cut off," (i.e. all the enemies of both): "and He shall speak peace to the heathen" (i.e. "the nations" of the world at large), "and His dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth:" the same Prophecy that we find in Ps. lxxii,—(which is also the best comment on the expression "the Kingdom of our father David," being 'a Psalm for Solomon' as the Type of the Messiah)—where this dominion is explained of all nations of the world with their kings: See verses 8—11.

2. We have, however, yet more decisive proof, if possible, of this fact—that Christ did not intend to

announce the coming of His Kingdom by this application of the Prophecy ; and more—that the Kingdom of Christ here foretold did not come at His first Advent and is not yet come,—in two passages immediately connected with this transaction which record His own testimony on this important question.

The first is a Parable supplied by St. Luke, in which the Saviour anticipates and corrects such a misapprehension, on the part of His disciples, of the scene they were about to witness ; namely, that of the occupying servants, related in the sixth chap. of that Gospel, next before the account of the entry into Jerusalem ; and which is introduced by these remarkable words, verse 11,—“And as they heard these things, He added and spake a parable, because He was nigh to Jerusalem *and because they thought that the Kingdom of God should immediately appear.*” He said *therefore*, A certain nobleman went into a far country *to receive for Himself a Kingdom and to return.* And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come. But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us. And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the

“ money, that he might know how much every man “ had gained by trading.” The remainder need not be quoted, specifying the award to each servant, and ending with the slaughter of the enemies who openly declared against His Kingly prerogative. It is sufficient to observe, that the demonstration is the most absolute that could be given, not only that the Kingdom of The Messiah,—or, as it is here termed, “ The Kingdom of God ” (which variation of Phrase it is also important to note)—expected at that time by the disciples and the nation generally, was not then to appear ; but further—that its appearing is definitely appointed to the time of His “ return ” or Second Coming : while the character of the Interval is also accurately given, as proved by the event—that some would be found to acknowledge His Title, occupying for Him in His absence as faithful servants : others professing the same allegiance but in unfaithfulness : and others, openly rejecting His authority and claims, and refusing His yoke altogether.

The other passage alluded to refers more particularly to the Salutation with which He was welcomed—“ Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord ”—taken from the cxviiith Psalm, verse 26, where it stands immediately connected with one of the most remarkable Prophecies of Christ in the

Old Testament and most frequently quoted in the New,—that, namely, which speaks of Him as “the Stone which the builders refused” and which should become “the Head-stone of the corner” (verse 22). This Prophecy then, as well as that of Zechariah, we might have concluded, received its complete accomplishment when so applied by the multitudes on this occasion. But, again, our Lord corrects this mistake when, two days after His entry into Jerusalem, He gives to this very Salutation another and yet future reference. I refer to His lament over Jerusalem, recorded at the end of the 23rd chapter of St. Matthew’s Gospel, and just before His prophecy of its destruction in the 24th chap. :—“O Jerusalem, “Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest “them which are sent unto thee, how often would I “have gathered thy children together even as a hen “gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye “would not! Behold, your house is left unto you “desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me “henceforth till ye shall say, *Blessed is He that “cometh in the name of the Lord.*” Observe—The account of His riding in triumph into Jerusalem had been given at the beginning of the 21st ch. having occurred (as already said) two days before. He cannot, therefore, be understood here to predict that they should *then* so address Him: but, alluding to

those who then refused to welcome Him and were sore displeased with those who did so, He predicts a time to come when the whole nation will be ready to join in the same cry; and that time, again, the time of His *return*: "Ye shall not *see me* henceforth till ye shall say . . ." the same day foretold by Zechariah, chap. xii. 9, 10,—not the day of Jerusalem's desolation but of her restoration and triumph—"And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will "seek to destroy all the nations that come against "Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of "David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the "spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall "look upon Him whom they have pierced, and they "shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only "son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that "is in bitterness for his first-born."

II. Such being the import of this Event, we are next to inquire—What is its connexion with those that followed, of so very different a character and presenting so great a contrast to it? What the ends designed to be answered by it at such a time? And these, I would say, are two in particular:—

1. First—As regarded His disciples, this unequivocal assertion of the title of King—that He was the Messiah-King whom the prophets had foretold—

coupled with the promise of His return in glory to reign, with which it was accompanied and of which it was a foreshadowing, was calculated, and doubtless designed, to assure their hearts and support them under the trial to which their faith was about to be exposed by His near approaching extreme humiliation.

Such assurances, such specimens or earnest of His "appearing and kingdom," we have seen vouchsafed on other occasions with a like object—to relieve the darkness to faith of His rejection by men. For example,—The Worship offered Him by the Magi on His Birth, when, in addition to the lowliness of His circumstances, the persecuting Herod sought to take His life. And, again, His Transfiguration, occurring (as was observed), according to the testimony of all the Evangelists, immediately after the first announcement to the disciples that he was to "suffer many things of the elders and chief-priests and scribes, and be killed." And so here,—the context in all the Gospels informs us that He had just before, on His way to Jerusalem, repeated the same prophecy in yet more explicit terms: thus Matt. ch. xx. 17—19, (His entry commencing ch. xxi.), "And Jesus, *going up to Jerusalem*, took the twelve disciples apart in "the way, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to "Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed

“unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes, and
“they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver
“him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and
“to crucify Him: and the third day He shall rise
“again.” (Compare also the parallel places St. Mark
x. 32—34 with xi. 1; and St. Luke xviii. 31—33
with xix. 29). “These things,” indeed, as St. John
adds in the passage before us, “understood not His
“disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified,”
—when He had departed from them into Heaven
and when they needed the consolation,—“*then*
“remembered they that these things were written
“of Him, and that they had done these things unto
“Him.” Nor is the same assurance and evidence
less valuable to all those who now “wait for His
coming” and “love His appearing”: for, (to repeat
the words of St. Peter in reference to the transfigu-
ration), “we have the word of Prophecy more sure”
—additionally confirmed—by such pledges, as we
may term them. And, who can tell how soon we
shall need all the support to faith which they can
administer, and all the light they can afford to cheer?
even in the darkness of “the last days,” when, as
the same Apostle informs us, (in a passage also then
quoted), this Truth will be the special subject of the
gainsaying of unbelievers and derision of “scoffers”
and “wilfully ignorant” so-called rationalists:—

the thickening signs of which Apostacy we already see in the contempt of all that authority in the earth which is the type of His, and the broaching and eager reception of theories which profess to accomplish that for man and the world which is the object of His kingdom.

2. Again—This assertion of His rightful Title and true dignity was eminently calculated to show that His humiliation, and especially His suffering of death, was *voluntary*; as He had said some time before ch. x. 18, "No man taketh my life from me, but I lay it down of myself: I have power to lay it down "and I have power to take it again." For, could not He who was thus welcomed by the multitudes have followed up this acknowledgment of His claim so as to have saved Himself from death? He who before this was obliged to withdraw into retirement on "perceiving that they would come and take Him "by force to make Him a king" (ch. vi. 15); and whose first act on entering the city was one that utterly confounded the chief-priests and scribes, as recorded in continuation by St. Matthew: "And "Jesus went into the Temple of God, and cast out all "them that sold and bought in the temple, and over- "threw the tables of the money-changers and the "seats of them that sold doves; and said unto them, "It is written, My house shall be called the house of

"prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves. "And the blind and the lame came to Him in the "temple; and He healed them. And when the "chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things "that He did, and the children crying in the "temple, and saying, Hosanna to the son of David; "they were sore displeased, and said unto Him, "Hearest Thou what these say? And Jesus saith "unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the "mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected "praise." "Perceive ye," said the Pharisees among themselves, "how ye prevail nothing? behold, the "world is gone after him": (ver. 19 of ch. before us). Could not He, I say, at such a time with ease have defied all their malice and all their power, and have avoided the cross? But no: He came to Jerusalem for the purpose of giving Himself up to them, and only submitted to be thus honoured that He might make it plain that He did so: that He might give this proof of His self-humiliation, and with it the proof of His Love—His great love for us—in that, to use the emphatic words of Scripture, He "*gave Himself* for us": (Titus ii. 14). For, the mysteries of His condescension and of His Love are one, and the proofs of His power and glory are the evidence and measure of His grace.

In conclusion—It is not irrelevant to ask, How

are we affected by the scene we have been contemplating? For it will yet be re-acted under far more glorious circumstances. The day is approaching when the Lord, as He has promised, will return having received his kingdom; and then again will He be attended by a Palm-bearing multitude—even the same that was seen by St. John in the Apocalyptic Vision, Rev. vii. 9, 10—"After this" (after the sealing of Israel) "I beheld, and lo, a multitude "which no man could number, of all nations, and "kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the "throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white "robes and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud "voice, saying, Salvation"—(which is the meaning of "Hosanna")—"Salvation to our God which sitteth "upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." They are now assembling there preparatory to the day when the Saviour shall take to Him His great power to reign and come in the clouds of Heaven, when they shall fall into His train and come with Him. Shall we be of that number? Shall we then join the crowd and swell the chorus of those who shall again say, "Hosanna! Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord?" This question is answered by another—Are we now of the number of those who acknowledge His Title, and who are occupying for Him in His absence, true to their allegiance, while

many are saying "we will not have this man to reign over us"? For so, whether we wake or sleep, we shall not be ashamed before Him at His coming: so we shall be a people "prepared for Him"; and shall hear His voice saying to each—"Well done thou good and faithful servant: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

THE LIFE OF CHRIST.

XII.—HE KEEPS THE PASSOVER AND INSTITUTES THE HOLY EUCHARIST.

ST. LUKE xxii. 7—20.

“Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the Passover must
“be killed. And He sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us
“the Passover, that we may eat. And they said unto Him, Where
“wilt thou that we prepare? And He said unto them, Behold, when
“ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a
“pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in.
“And ye shall say unto the goodman of the house, The Master saith
“unto thee, Where is the guest-chamber, where I shall eat the Passover
“with my disciples? And he shall shew you a large upper room fur-
“nished: there make ready. And they went, and found as He had
“said unto them; and they made ready the Passover. And when the
“hour was come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him. And
“He said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this Passover
“with you before I suffer: for I say unto you, I will not any more eat
“thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And he took the
“cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among
“yourselves: for I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine,
“until the kingdom of God shall come.

“And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto
“them, saying, This is my body, which is given for you: this do in
“remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying,
“This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.”

FROM the triumphant entry of our Lord into
Jerusalem, which we have seen took place on the

first day of the week, we pass to His observance of the Passover and instituting of the Holy Eucharist, as recorded in this section, on the fifth day of the same week, the day before He suffered. Not that the intervening days are without matter for notice: for, on the contrary, they were very eventful—being occupied by the solemn and formal closing of His public Ministry: it being then that, (after successively confuting and exposing the wickedness and hypocrisy of the Herodians and Sadducees, the Scribes and Pharisees), He proceeded to utter His last warning to the Nation in the Parables of “The Vineyard” and “Marriage-feast,” Matt. xxi. and xxii; and the series of “Woes” which occupy ch. xxiii, ending with His parting declaration and Prophecy, quoted in last Discourse, on leaving the Temple for the last time: after which follows His special instruction to His disciples, embracing the detailed Prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem and of His Second Coming, ch. xxiv. of the same Gospel; and the Parables, relative to preparation for the latter event, of The ten Virgins—The Talents—and of the Sheep and Goats, ch. xxv. But our present object confines us to the transactions more immediately affecting Himself, of which the next in order is that now proposed for consideration.

I. Of all the Ordinances, then, of the Jewish religion the PASSOVER was the principal, as of all the Types of the redemption it was the most perfect and circumstantial: so much so that to trace all the points of analogy would afford matter for several discourses. At present, however, it is only necessary to advert to the main design of its institution as far as it serves to illustrate the Christian ordinance which our Lord here grafts upon and substitutes for it: in which connexion I would suggest that it is above all things important to note a distinction in typical significance between the first and all subsequent observances of it—the overlooking of which has in many instances contributed to, if indeed it have not originated, serious errors respecting the nature and design of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper—namely, *That in its first observance the Passover was a propitiatory, and ever after a commemorative, Sacrifice.* That is to say,—On the occasion of its first observance, the night of the children of Israel's Exodus from the land of Egypt, it was the actual means of their redemption: the blood of the paschal lamb sprinkled upon the door-posts of their houses being the “token” for the Lord to “pass-over” (or overshadow) them, and so prevent the destroyer—the messenger of the divine judgment upon Egypt by the slaughter of the first-born—from

coming into their houses to smite them, as may be seen by referring to Exod. ch. xii. verses 7, and 12, 13: "And they shall take of the blood, and strike it "on the two side-posts, and on the upper door-post "of the houses wherein they shall eat it." . . .
"For I will pass through the land of Egypt this "night, and will smite all the first-born in the land "of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the "gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the "LORD. And the blood shall be to you for a token "upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the "blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall "not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the "land of Egypt." Whereas in its after-observance, as the next verse states, it was "A MEMORIAL"; "And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; "and ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout "your generations: ye shall keep it a feast by an "ordinance for ever": for, as added ver. 42, "It is "a night to be much observed unto the LORD for "bringing them out from the land of Egypt"; the event of all others in their history most memorable, being their redemption from bondage and separation to the Lord to be His peculiar people, as they are reminded in the preamble to the Law—"I am the "LORD thy God which have brought thee out of the "land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage: Thou

“shalt have no other Gods before me.” It was not therefore like the annual day of atonement appointed in Lev. xvi., when a sacrifice was offered for all the people, the blood of which was brought within the veil by the High Priest and sprinkled before the mercy-seat to obtain remission of their sins—a day on which they were to afflict their souls and a solemn fast; but a day of thanksgiving and a joyful feast, as of a redeemed people, in the full consciousness of blessing and acceptance, celebrating their deliverance.

And as it was on the occasion of *this* solemnity that our Lord instituted the holy Eucharist, so of *this*, and not of the *first* Passover, is that Sacrament the antitype and substitute. For, the antitype of the Passover itself, which was but once, is the *one* offering of Christ, by which, as the one only propitiatory sacrifice, our redemption was effected, as was Israel’s by the first Passover: when, also, all the particulars of the Type were so minutely realized—the Lamb without blemish or spot—of which not a bone was broken—killed “between the two evenings”—of which the blood was the veritable atonement which “cleanseth from all sin,” and saves from the power of the Great Destroyer. While, in the often-observed Supper of the Lord we keep the MEMORIAL of this our redemption, like Israel in their often-celebrated Paschal-Feast, as well as set forth the

blessings of which by it we are partakers: as the Apostle states the distinction in 1 Cor. v. 7, 8, "Christ our Passover is sacrificed" (rather "hath been sacrificed") for us; therefore let us keep the "feast"; the past fact once for all—"Christ *hath been sacrificed*" as the actual "*Pass-over*"; the memorial of this fact continuous—"let us *keep the feast.*"

Such the analogy between these two Ordinances in *nature* and *design*: let us now briefly notice,—

II. In the Second place, the further analogy in the significant acts or rites of both.

The significant and typical acts of the Passover were two—First, the killing of the Paschal Lamb; and, Second, the eating of it by each household.

1. "The Passover must be killed"—not (as already remarked) like the first, and the sacrifices in general, for present atonement, and accordingly not slain with the same solemnities; but in commemoration of that sacrifice by the blood of which the nation had been redeemed. And so in the Christian Feast we significantly set forth and "shew the death of Christ" by breaking the bread and pouring out the cup which are the emblems of His body broken and His blood shed: though manifestly not the fitting elements of a propitiatory

sacrifice to which the shedding of blood is an indispensable requisite. For which reason they who would make of this sacrament a propitiatory sacrifice have been compelled, consistently indeed but most erroneously, to supply this deficiency by the supposition of a transubstantiation or change-of-the-substance of the elements : which, it may be remarked, is the great objection to that dogma, rather than its incredibility—the fact that it *repeats* the sacrifice of Christ, and by repeating, (according to the argument of the Apostle in the xth ch. of the Epistle to the Hebrews,) *denies its perfection and sufficiency*. Fearful and dangerous heresy ! in contemplating the consequences of which we must only hope that the multitudes who countenance it know not what they do : while, thankful that we have been delivered from it, we pray to be still preserved from it.

But, on the other hand, though this Sacrament be not a propitiatory sacrifice, it should be carefully maintained that neither is it a Memorial in the ordinary sense of that word, intended merely to bring before the mind the death of Christ, and, by refreshing our recollection of that truth, to revive our faith in it, as some, going into an opposite extreme of error, teach ; but that, being *the token and memorial of a Covenant*, in the faithful observance of it there is sealed to us (as our Church teaches) ‘the remission

‘of our sins and all other benefits of HIS passion’ of whose ‘precious death’ and ‘full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins ‘of the whole world,’ made on the cross, we thus ‘continue a perpetual memory.’ For, else it were inferior to its Type, which sealed to Israel the blessings of that Covenant made with them on their redemption from Egypt. And this our Lord plainly stated when, as we read verse 19, “He took bread, “and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, “saying, This is my body which is given for you; “this do in remembrance of Me:” (or, more literally, “for a memorial of Me”). “Likewise also the cup “after supper, saying, This cup is the new Testament” (or “Covenant”) “in my blood, which is “shed for you:” or, as in St. Matthew, “This is “my blood of the new Testament” (or “Covenant”) “which is shed for many for the remission of sins.” Observe—“*the New Covenant*,” of which the promise is “*the remission of sins*” confirmed to us in this Ordinance ‘as’ (again to quote the words of our Church) ‘a means whereby we receive the same and ‘a pledge to assure us thereof.’

2. It is, however, in the second significant act of both Ordinances that this sacramental character is peculiarly manifest: in the eating of the Passover, and the similar act of participating of the consecrated

symbols of the body and blood of Christ, by which the memorial of His sacrifice has been made, in the Lord's Supper.

That the Israelite of old could not have apprehended the meaning of this part of the solemnity in which he was engaged is indeed certain. The most that we can suppose is that, while feeding on the sacrifice, the life-blood of which just shed commemorated the means of his redemption, he might conjecture that this action shadowed forth some mysterious union between the promised Redeemer and His redeemed, over and above the remission of sins for which the killing of the Passover were sufficient. But still it was a shadow, and a dark shadow, of "a good thing to come," which the faith of the worshippers would in vain seek to penetrate. Not so the communicants in the Lord's Supper—the Christian Passover. "To them it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven": and among these pre-eminently 'the great benefit' to those who 'with a true penitent heart and lively faith receive that holy Sacrament'; that, not only have we remission of sin sealed to us through the body broken and the blood shed of Him who is the very Paschal Lamb; but that in partaking of the Memorials of His Sacrifice 'we spiritually eat the flesh 'of Christ and drink His blood; then we dwell in

‘Christ and Christ in us; we are one with Christ and ‘Christ with us’: and ‘are assured thereby that we ‘are very members incorporate in His Mystical body’ . . . ‘and also heirs through hope of His everlasting Kingdom.’ In other words, that we have not only, as had Israel, the reprieve of the natural life from death by the sacrifice of our Passover, but a new and spiritual life; imparted in the one Sacrament, the antitype of Circumcision—that Baptism which (as we have seen) is “the circumcision of the Spirit”; and nourished and invigorated, ‘strengthened and refreshed’ in the other, by “the *Communion* of the body and blood of Christ:” (1 Cor. x. 16).

Are these things so? Then, well might our Lord say, as here ver. 15, “with desire have I desired to “eat this Passover with you before I suffer”; purposing as He did to make it the occasion of conferring on His apostles and, through them, on His Church, the highest privilege and richest means of grace which Christianity itself affords—not only a benefit flowing from His Incarnation, but the very experience and realization of the Incarnation itself in the union with Him which this Sacrament thus at once symbolizes and maintains: not only the blessed results of His *Death and Passion*, but the power of His *Resurrection*; the fellowship with the Father and the Son in His *Ascension*; and the present earnest

of being glorified together with Him at His *Re-appearing*—in that Kingdom which, so often as we keep this Feast and Memorial, we anticipate, in that we “shew forth His death UNTIL HE COME.”

But, again I ask—Are these things so? Is such the design and such the value of this Ordinance? Then what shall we say of those who systematically neglect it? The Jew who should “forbear to keep the Passover” unless prevented by necessity, was condemned to be “cut off from among his people” as we read in Num. ix. 13; the same sentence denounced against him who should neglect to be circumcised, as one who had thereby “broken the Lord’s Covenant,” (Gen. xvii. 14): and so the Christian who neglects to communicate excommunicates himself; he cuts himself off from the Church, because only communicants are, properly speaking, members of the Church: and in so far classes himself with the unbaptized. Besides that he deprives himself of a means of grace and support of spiritual life *which no other ordinance can supply*, as none other is the sign and pledge of so inestimable a blessing. Yet from the practice of many, one would suppose that this, instead of being the chief, were the least of all the ordinances. I speak not now of Churches in which the Holy Communion is actually celebrated but once in the year, or, it may be, twice; and in

whose places of worship "the Table of the Lord" has been put out and the Pulpit put in its place; but of many in our own Church, in which the opportunity is afforded of frequent Communion—(of weekly Communion, indeed, where the plainly indicated intention of our Service is acted on)—who will crowd together, and regularly, to hear a popular Preacher, and as regularly neglect this Ordinance: as though Preaching (or, to call it by its proper name, Teaching) were the primary object of our coming together, instead of being altogether secondary and subservient—in so far only profitable as it makes of our congregations better worshippers and more worthy Communicants.

Do I address any such here? Let me earnestly commend to your attention the paramount obligation as well as paramount benefit of the observance which you have thus disregarded: and especially at this season when we are about to commemorate the great fact of our redemption—that "Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us," let me exhort you to prepare "to keep the feast" wherein we celebrate the memorial of His Love as well as express our thankfulness to God for "His inestimable Gift"—the gift of His dear Son and, with and in Him, of "ETERNAL LIFE."

THE LIFE OF CHRIST.

XIII.—HIS BETRAYAL.

ST. MATT. XXVI. 21—25.

“And as they did eat, He said, Verily I say unto you, That one of you shall betray me. And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I? And he answered and said, He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me. The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born. Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said.”

As the hour of the Redeemer's death approaches we find the events of the sacred Narrative crowd upon us, and His history become more and more circumstantial; as if to impress us with the surpassing importance of the occasion, and to rivet our attention upon it. Thus we have seen the last evening of His Life signalized by His keeping the Passover and instituting the Holy Communion: and in the space of the one remaining day we read of His Betrayal by Judas—His Agony in the Garden—His

Denial by Peter—His Arrest and Trial—and His Crucifixion.

Resuming then from the Paschal Supper at which we left Him and His disciples assembled, His Betrayal next engages our thoughts: and on comparing the several notices of it in Scripture to ascertain the instruction to be derived from it, we can see two purposes in particular to which it was overruled and made subservient—the one as it affected the Saviour Himself at the time: and the other as it prospectively affected His Church, and left on record a lesson for after ages.

I. First—As it respects the Saviour, the question may occur to us, Why the Chief-Priests and Rulers of the Jews who sought His destruction should have been obliged to compass it in this way? What need had they to arrest Him thus stealthily by night, and to bribe a person to betray His retreat? And very important is the question and very material its bearing on the events that followed—on the sufferings which the Saviour endured at their hands. For, it confirms the inference already drawn from the circumstances which had attended His entrance into the city a few days before, the fact, namely, that—as He said to Pilate, “Thou couldst have no power “at all against Me, except it were given thee from

"above,"—His sufferings from the beginning were altogether voluntary; that He laid down His life of Himself. It was the time of the Passover when the greatest number of the people were collected in the city, and we have seen how the multitudes received Him—in such a way as completely to intimidate His enemies, and prove that, had He pleased, He could without a miracle have defied their power: and this they now acknowledge and proclaim by their own act, as we read ver. 3—5 of this chapter:—
"Then assembled together the Chief-priests, and
" the Scribes, and the Elders of the people, unto the
" palace of the High-priest who was called Caiaphas,
" and consulted that they might take Jesus by
" subtilty and kill Him. But they said, Not on the
" feast (day),"—rather "not during the feast,—lest
" there be an uproar among the people."

It was necessary, however, that (independent of this—apart from this apprehended interference of the people to defeat their object—) not only they but those whom they sent to arrest Him should be made to feel that He was able to deliver Himself out of their hands. These, we learn, consisted of a detachment of Roman troops accompanied by a mixed multitude of the retainers of the Sanhedrim, who, armed with swords and staves, carrying lanterns and torches, proceeded to the place of His retirement

led by His betrayer. So verse 47, "And while He yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the Chief-Priests and Elders of the people:" and St. John xviii. 3, "Judas then, having received a band of men and officers" (rather "the band"—the Roman cohort on duty, "and the officers) from the Chief-Priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons." "Jesus therefore," (continues the latter Evangelist), "knowing all things that should come upon Him, went forth and said unto them, Whom seek ye? They answered Him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am He. And Judas, also, which betrayed Him, stood with them. As soon then as He had said unto them, I am He, they went backward and fell to the ground." Observe,—soldiers and people, Jews and Heathens, the whole multitude, and they armed, are confounded in the presence of one man, and struck to the ground on His merely uttering the words "I AM HE"! And who does not now expect to see His Divine power put forth as of old in the destruction of the hosts of a Pharaoh and a Sennacherib? or, as in the instance of the companies sent to arrest the Prophet, the fire of heaven falling on them and consuming them? But no: His power was proved, and that was enough. His

reproof addressed to the disciple who drew a sword in His defence tells us why it was not as we expect:—"And, behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high-priest, and smote off his ear. Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" (Matt. xxvi. 51—54). "The cup which my Father hath given me shall I not drink it?" (John xviii. 11.)

2. Again, viewing His Betrayal as it affected Himself, it was no small part of His suffering—a bitter ingredient in that cup of affliction; as we may see from the words of the Prophecy of the Event,—His own language in anticipation of it—Ps. xli. 9, "Yea, mine own familiar friend in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me:" and, Ps. lv. 12—14, "For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him: but it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance. We took

"sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house
"of God in company." And so in John xiii. 21, we
read, "When Jesus had thus said, *He was troubled*
"*in spirit*, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I
"say unto you, that one of you shall betray me."
"*One of you*"—How much is in these three words!
And add to this the circumstances of the transaction:
—the *place*; "And Judas also, which betrayed Him,
"(says St. John), knew the place; for Jesus oftentimes
"resorted thither with His disciples." His favorite
retreat, where Judas had often been admitted to
share, if he could have shared, the few undisturbed
hours of Jesus' life! And the mode,—*the sign* which
he gave to those whose guide he was; the greeting
of warmest friendship: "Whomsoever I shall kiss
"that same is He; hold him fast. And forthwith
"he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, Master, and
"kissed him"! Not omitting also a circumstance
which is so important as to be made the subject of
separate Prophecy—*the price* at which the traitor
valued Him, which, we learn from Exod. xxi. 32, was
the price of a slave: so completely was the saying
verified—"He was despised and rejected of men."

But this brings us to,—

II. The second bearing of this Event,—that,
namely, on the Church of Christ; and to the instruc-

tion in a practical point of view to be derived from it more immediately by ourselves.

That among the disciples called and chosen by the Lord Himself—among the twelve Apostles, and present at the First Communion—there should have been one so false as to betray Him, is a fact which we cannot but regard as designed to afford a specimen, or type (if we may so say), of the future constitution or condition of the Christian Church: an intimation that, as at the first so thenceforward, false professors should always be found mixed up with the true; or, in the words of our Lord's prophetic Parable, that "tares" should be "sown among the wheat." Not indeed avowed unbelievers or openly wicked livers, of whom Judas is no type, and for whose removal from the Communion of the Church a provision was made; but a far worse evil—hypocritical professors "having a name to live while they are dead," "the form of godliness but denying the power thereof:" such as was Judas, as is evident from the circumstance that none of his fellow disciples suspected him of the act even when apprized of it; each saying for himself, "Lord, Is it I?" And it were well if the Type and Prophecy had been duly heeded by those who from time to time have attempted the formation of a pure communion by the adoption of extra-ordinary and uncatholic tests of faith and practice, not knowing

that every refinement of both will but produce a doubly-refined hypocrisy, which is far more injurious to the interests of true religion and of the Church than open immorality, of which, because open, every one is aware, and which is condemned of itself.

But especially the case of Judas would intimate that among those who should succeed the Apostles in the government and charge of the Church—its Bishops and Pastors and Ministers generally—would be found ‘false Apostles’ who should seek that high office from unworthy motives and abuse it to unworthy purposes:* and accordingly it is very remarkable that—not only is this anticipation confirmed by many passages of the New Testament, but,—*his sin* is particularly specified as the one from which most was to be feared as a corrupting principle in those who should hold the sacred office of the ministry, and through them in the Church at large.

We are indeed in the habit of regarding Judas Iscariot as a single instance—a solitary specimen of baseness and depravity. And it is true that he is distinguished in Scripture by fearful and mysterious terms: for example in St. John vi. 70, where Jesus, in answer to a profession of faith in Him made by St. Peter in behalf of himself and fellow Apostles, says, “Have not I chosen you twelve and one of you is a

* See the Collect for St. Matthias’ Day.

"devil?" And again we read (chapter xiii. 27,) that "Satan entered into him." And again, (Acts i. 25) "from which (the apostleship) Judas by transgression fell that he might go to his own place:" while to him is given a title which is given to only one other—even that "Man of Sin" and "Wicked One" yet to be revealed who is said to come up from and return to "the bottomless pit" or "abyss"—the title "The Son of perdition:" whence we must infer that of him in a special sense he was the Type. But it is worthy of note that, though Satan is thus said to have possessed him, his working was (as always) in a natural manner and by Judas's ruling passion or propensity. This varies in different persons. In some it is pride—in some sensuality—in him it was covetousness or the love of money: by which accordingly he was tempted to commit the crime of betraying his Lord, as may be shown by comparing two passages relating to this transaction, namely, St. John xii. 3—6 with verses 14—16 of the chapter before us; in the first of which we find him objecting to the pious act of Mary the sister of Lazarus in anointing the feet of Jesus:—"Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment. Then said one of his

"disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein;" where the word which we render "bare" is literally, in our common phrase, "made away with:" he kept the common purse of the company and was in the habit of appropriating its contents dishonestly. This, as to his general character or ruling propensity. But that it was this same propensity that prompted him to betray Christ we are further informed by the other passage referred to, where St. Matthew, following up the narrative of this occurrence, adds—"THEN one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, and said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him." Not that we are to infer that he contemplated the act from the beginning; but he joined the company of Christ's disciples entertaining worldly expectations; believing, with the majority of the nation, that as Messiah He was about then to restore the kingdom to Israel: and when these hopes were disappointed—when he became assured that his

Master was about to suffer death, he then determined to gain something by Him. And this, the Evangelist tells us, was not till the day before he entered Jerusalem to suffer, and owing to the incident here related;—on Jesus' uttering the words, "For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did *"it for my burial"* (ver. 12); "*THEN—from that time* he sought opportunity to betray Him." He had heard him before (in common with the other Apostles) speak of the Son of Man being put to death without understanding him: he was also, no doubt, aware of the intentions of the chief priests and scribes and elders to put Him to death when an opportunity should occur: but whatever doubt he might have had as to the result Jesus himself now removes, and now for the first time the idea occurs to him of turning the event to his own advantage: reconciling his treachery to himself (as men will in such cases) by the argument that if it must be—if his Master must die—he would not be guilty of his death, nor in fact do Him any injury, while so benefiting himself. To such results and so unforeseen may one uncontrolled propensity—one sin indulged in—one unresisted temptation lead!

And, I say, it is very remarkable that we should find this very propensity and sin of Judas particularly distinguished among the causes of corruption in the

Church predicted to take place in the times to succeed the Apostles. For example, Acts xx. 28, 29, in St. Paul's farewell address to the elders of the church at Ephesus: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and "to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost "hath made you overseers, to feed the church of "God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. "For I know this, that after my departing shall "grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing "the flock:" while he appeals, in contrast, to his own conduct in this respect, verses 33—35, "I have "coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. Yea, "ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were "with me. I have showed you all things, how that "so labouring ye ought to support the weak; and "to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he "said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." And so in the directions as to the qualifications of Bishops by this same Apostle we find this one uniformly specified—"not greedy of filthy lucre." Likewise St. Peter, 1 Ep. v. 1—3, "The Elders "which are among you I exhort . . . Feed the "flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not "for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as "being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples

“to the flock.” While he also prophesies that “covetousness” would be the ruling motive with false teachers that should arise, 2 Ep. ii. 1—3: “But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through *covetousness* shall they with feigned words *make merchandise of you*. . . .” And it were well worth while to search, in studying the history of the Church, how far all the corruptions of which we read may be traced to this one prolific source: how far,—not only the abuse of ecclesiastical power with its long train of evils, or the growth of luxury and self-indulgence in the room of self-denial, but—even heresies and doctrinal corruptions, however apparently speculative in their nature, may be found to have owed their origin and prevalence to the ambition and self-interest of men, seeking to draw away disciples after them in order (as the Apostle has said) “to make merchandize of them,” or with a view in some way to their own aggrandizement. Not, however, that the sin is confined to the Governors or Pastors of the Church:

“for,” as the Apostle says again, “the love of money “is the root (*or* a root) of all evil;” against which, therefore, all need to be continually warned as that “temptation and snare” which more than all others entraps in those “foolish and hurtful lusts which” (as in Judas’s case) “drown men in destruction and perdition.”

Let us then “take heed and beware of covetousness,” lest we also be led by it to betray Christ. For we may do this now as effectually as did Judas. Is it asked, How? The question would take long time to answer fully: but, in brief, we betray Christ,—

1. First,—If in the religious profession that we make we have respect to any worldly advantage; whether it be only our reputation and character in the eyes of men, or that to which this leads and contributes—our actual profit in our business, profession, or otherwise. This consideration first led Judas to attach himself to Christ, and afterwards, when circumstances and prospects changed, to betray Him. And it remains to be seen how many of those who now make profession of Christianity because it is popular, or attach themselves to the Church because it is established or respectable, will remain true to their profession should the tide of popular opinion turn as it threatens to do, and Christianity or the

Church come to be as generally contemned as now they are esteemed: how many, were Anti-Christ revealed, would fall away to him and take his name and mark, who now range under the banner of Christ; bearing His name and signed with the sign of His Cross.

2. Again,—and more generally,—All *false profession* is the sin of Judas and a betraying of Christ, whatever be the form it take, or whatever its motive. This I attempt not here to scan. I must leave it to your self-examination, in the presence of HIM ‘unto ‘whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and ‘from whom no secrets are hid:’ only charging you to remember in this examination that as of all things God most loves and delights in sincerity and truth, so of all things does He most abhor hypocrisy and deceit.

THE LIFE OF CHRIST.

XIV.—HIS AGONY IN GETHSEMANE.

ST. MARK xiv. 32—42.

“ And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane: and He saith to His disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray. And He taketh with Him Peter, and James, and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy; and saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch. And He went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him. And He said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from Me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt. And He cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? couldst not thou watch one hour? Watch ye, and pray, lest ye enter into temptation: the spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak. And again He went away, and prayed, and spake the same words. And when He returned, He found them asleep again; (for their eyes were heavy;) neither wist they what to answer Him. And He cometh the third time, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: it is enough, the hour is come; behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise up, let us go; lo, he that betrayeth Me is at hand.”

WE now come to a scene in the Life of our blessed Lord which it becomes us to approach with feelings of solemnity and deepest reverence—“ to put off our

shoes from off our feet" while we tread this "holy ground," where is disclosed a mystery so awful, so sacred, as to make us hesitate to discourse of it. But it is written for our instruction. Our Lord also took with Him witnesses of this transaction. He therefore intends that we should look into it and learn from it. He invites us in their persons to draw near and see this wondrous sight—the Agony of the Redeemer. May we retire from the contemplation affected as He would have us!

Following the narrative our attention will be first directed to the Agony itself; then to the Saviour's thrice repeated Prayer; and, lastly, to the lesson from the scene to the Witnesses and in them to all His disciples.

I. Though the account given us is brief, yet there is sufficient to shew that the Agony of our Lord on this occasion was intense beyond conception. Thus, in the passage before us we read—"He began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy: and saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death:" to which St. Luke adds—"And there appeared an angel unto Him from heaven, strengthening Him: and, being in an agony, He prayed more earnestly, and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground;" (ch.

xxii. 43, 44):—whence we infer that there must have been a cause for His sorrow at that hour over and above the anticipation of His crucifixion—that somewhat more was then endured by Him than would be occasioned by the prospect of death even in its most painful or ignominious form; that His sufferings were not merely bodily, but, (which we know to be far more severe and intolerable), mental and internal, such as to be judged of by us only from the extraordinary effects on His agonized frame here mentioned.

But we are not left to inference. The Scriptures at once confirm the fact and account for it, when they tell us that in these sufferings He was accomplishing the work of our redemption—a work which involved a supernatural “conflict,” (as the word “agony” denotes), and one which none but He could have sustained. For,

1. In the first place, He had to encounter,—now, indeed, for the last time, but in his strongest hold—the great Enemy of man, in order to rescue the captives whom he had enslaved: “through death to “destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the “Devil; and deliver them who through fear of death “were all their life-time subject to bondage” (Heb. ii. 15). This “conflict,” we have seen, commenced so soon as He entered on His office and mission as

“The Christ:” so soon as He was “anointed” at His Baptism by the Holy Spirit descending on Him—that new power with which the humanity was in His person endowed as the Second Adam, as undertaking for man to set him up again in the standing of Life and give to him a new Head; and which was now to be tried that it might be seen whether this new and spiritual man were One who could indeed show himself to be proof against all the temptations and assaults of him by whom the first Adam was overcome—One able to stand where he fell. *Then* “was He led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the Devil,” who, defeated though he was in all his attempts, was not yet finally overcome, but “departed from Him for a season:” implying that his assaults would be renewed, as they were again and again, and never (we must conclude) more fiercely than at the end, when—as said of him on another occasion, in reference to his last and yet future persecution of the Church, the body of Christ, herein to be conformed to its Head in suffering before entering into His glory,—he would “have great wrath knowing that He had but a short time,” exasperated, moreover, by all his former defeats. As indeed our Lord intimated, when, a few moments before, on His way to Gethsemane, He said to His disciples (St. John xiv. 30) “Hereafter I will not talk much

"with you ; for the Prince of this world cometh, "and hath nothing in me. But, that the world may "know that I love the Father, and as the Father "gave me commandment, even so I do:" that is, 'He hath nothing in me, but I submit thus to be assailed by him to prove that it is so—that the world may know that in love to the Father and obedience to His will, I, as the Son of Man, am without fault.' And a little after, to those sent to arrest Him—" *This is your hour and the power of darkness,*" (Luke xxii. 53). While,

2. Again,—“His soul was exceeding sorrowful *unto death*,” not only as death was thus to Him arrayed in all the terrors with which he who has the power of death could invest it, but, because He was doomed to meet it without that consolation which none as He could appreciate, and with a cause of grief which none as He could feel. For, having vouchsafed to give His life “an offering for sin,” and in His death to bear its curse, to Him it was death indeed. Unalleviated by the Hope, unilluminated by the Light which attends it to His redeemed, to whom it has lost its sting by the victory He then achieved ; it was the darkness itself of “the valley of the shadow of death” that confronted Him : the cup filled to the full for Him which we but taste, and mixed with every most bitter ingredient that our sin

and its desert could supply: even to the hiding of His Father's countenance, and the ineffable anguish of that moment when He cried—"My God, My God, Why hast Thou forsaken Me!"

But we turn to contemplate,—

II. In the next place—The Saviour's deportment under this accumulated affliction: "And He went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him. And He said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto Thee; take away this cup from Me: nevertheless not what I will, but what Thou wilt."

We have an inspired Comment on this part of the narrative, which is a sure guide to its exposition,—in the vth ch. of the Epistle to the Hebrews ver. 7—9, where, speaking of Christ, and with evident reference to this occasion, the Apostle says—"Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared: though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and, being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."

This passage is important, in the first place, as

asserting the Saviour's Divinity in connexion with the transaction which exhibited His extremest humiliation, as, we may truly say, did the scene at Gethsemane: in the words—"Though He were a Son "yet learned He obedience by the things which He "suffered"—in the condescension expressed in the contrast between the conditions of *sonship* and *service*. For, of what created Being, Angel or Man, could it be said that his obedience was *notwithstanding* his proper condition or nature—that he *condescended* to learn obedience as that to which he was not already bounden? For example, read the sentence so: 'Though he were a man'—or 'Though he were an angel' (i.e. a messenger or minister of God)—'he learned obedience.' Where now is the contrast? wherein lies the contradistinction? There is none; forasmuch as obedience is the natural condition and bounden duty of every creature: yea, even reading "Son," unless we understand a Son equal to the Father, and therefore under no Law; One "who being "in the form of God" (to quote again the words of a parallel passage, Phil. ii. 6, 7) "thought it not "robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of "no reputation, (rather, "emptied himself" of His "glory), and took upon Him the form of a servant." *How* this was done—how He so placed His Divinity in abeyance as thus truly to be humbled and to

suffer—it concerns us not to ask, neither could we understand. But *why* it was done we should know and is also stated in this comment on our Text: “Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience “by the things which He suffered; and, being made “perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation “unto all that obey Him.” “Being made perfect”—that is to say, by this His obedience in Man’s Nature, exhibiting it thus in complete conformity to the will of God, He became *perfectly qualified* to be Man’s Redeemer—to be the propitiation for his sins, his surety, mediator, and saviour—to sustain all and recover all for him. In which qualification also lay the *necessity* for His drinking this cup—the impossibility of its passing from Him: a necessity, however, which only His love for us sinners, and the love of the Father, imposed on Him. And yet a necessity how dire—how awful in the sufferings it involved—His “prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death” are the witness to us! the thrice repeated cry “Abba, Father, all things are possible unto Thee: take away this cup from me. . . .”

“And He was heard in that He feared” (or “apprehended”¹), adds the Apostle. He was saved, not indeed “*from death*” in the sense of escape from

¹ ἀπὸ τῆς ἐλαβείας, comp. ἐλαβείας ch. xi. 7, Acts xxiii. 10.

it, but "*out of death*" (as it is in the original¹), namely, by Resurrection, in that way which was consistent with the purpose of redemption and with that will of the Father to which He here submits Himself, saying, "Nevertheless not what I will, but what Thou wilt." St. Luke also adds that "there appeared an angel unto Him from heaven, strengthening Him" (chap. xxii. 43): that is, supporting Him with the aid ever available to the righteous servant of God,—a fulfilment of the promise to him who should "put his trust in Jehovah" by which He had been once, but in vain, tempted to mistrust Him,—“He shall give His angels charge over Thee to keep Thee in all Thy ways.” Of such “trust” or faith, as being the principle of obedience, Jesus was the perfect example: and, that He might be so, divested Himself (as just said) of His Divine prerogatives and power and refused to avail Himself of them that He might truly both obey and suffer; that He might be “in all things tempted like as we are:” which leads us to notice,—

III. Lastly—The Witnesses of this mystery of suffering, condescension, and love, and the lesson to us and to them from it. “And they came”—Jesus and the eleven disciples—“to a place which was

¹ in *Savátou*.

"named Gethsemane : and He saith to the disciples;
"Sit ye here while I shall pray. And He taketh
"with Him Peter, and James, and John. . . ."

On a former occasion (it will be remembered) we noticed the selection of these same three disciples to be witnesses of a very different scene—the Transfiguration of the Saviour on the mount, (ch. ix. 2): when also the reason of the selection was intimated—that, having been "eye-witnesses of His Majesty" and of "the honour and glory received" then by Him, and having heard "the voice from the excellent glory" which attested His Divinity, they might be prepared for the trial to which their faith would be subjected in witnessing (as at this hour) His extreme humiliation and intense agony. And here, then, is—

1. The first lesson to us also: That in meditating on the sufferings of Christ we should ever connect them with "the glory to follow;" lest our faith too be shaken in that Truth on which hinges the whole of His Love to us, because the whole of His condescension for us,—His LORDSHIP, as the Only-begotten SON of the Father and, as Son, "HEIR OF ALL THINGS." The "manifestation" of this glory is not yet, being appointed for that day—of which we saw that the Transfiguration is the type and earnest—the day of His Second Coming, "His appearing and kingdom:" and still "we preach Christ crucified."

But we must be careful not so exclusively to preach Him crucified as though He were not glorified, or in dwelling on the darkness of Gethsemane to forget the light that illumined Mount Tabor—the exaltation of the Son of God in the lowliness of the Son of Man. And yet, Is not this the character of modern teaching with few exceptions? in which we seldom hear mention made of the Second Coming of the Saviour in its distinctive objects; but, in its stead, such views of His “kingdom” as, in disconnecting it from His “appearing,” compromise the evidence to be afforded by it of His *personal* Dignity and Glory: and with what peril to the faith of the Church remains to be seen in those “last days,” (fast approaching, if we may judge from the signs of our times), when “there shall come scoffers walking after their own lusts and saying, Where is the promise of His “Coming?” ‘You give evidence (they may say) of the humiliation of Jesus of Nazareth; but where is the evidence of His glory and its promised “manifestation?” If he be the Messiah where is the kingdom which should subject the world—of the Son of David, the true Solomon, Jehovah’s King in Zion; and the signs to follow—the making his enemies his footstool, the restitution of all things, and “a new Heavens and a new Earth wherein dwelleth righteousness?”’ Our answer is ready, the

answer of faith:—He came once to suffer and He comes again to reign, “this same Jesus;” and, with the favoured three, we also may say—“We have not followed cunningly devised fables when we made known unto you the POWER and COMING of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of His MAJESTY.” . . . “We,” too, “beheld His GLORY.”

2. But there is another lesson to them and to us from this scene, which they could not understand then but would soon after. For the time was at hand when, as the Lord had told two of them—the sons of Zebedee—they should drink of the cup which He then drank of and be baptized with His baptism—be called to “suffer with Him” and to “bear His cross:” a calling not peculiar to them but that of all who should be baptized in His Name from that time even until His coming again, when the now militant state of the Church shall be exchanged for the triumphant. And their deportment under these trials they were to learn from Him—the like submission to the “will” of their heavenly “Father,”—His Father and theirs: for as He was so are all they—all who are His—in this world; and His very language also theirs, His very cry here uttered—“Abba, Father!” as St. Paul teaches us, Gal. iv. 6, “And because ye are sons God hath sent forth the

"Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, "Father:" another allusion to this hour of Jesus' trial in Gethsemane when alone it is recorded of Him that He so cried; confirmed by the word "crying"—the utterance of distress and anguish.

And, What a consolation this! What the trial, what the affliction which would not be tolerable if we might regard it as suffering with Christ? or, Who would refuse so to suffer? In our case, indeed, the cup may pass from us which might not pass from Him; and at most we do but taste of that which He drank to the very dregs: but to taste it is our privilege not our loss; our blessing not our curse; as thereby we are conformed to Christ, and follow Him who, as "the Captain of our Salvation," was "made perfect through sufferings." May we in the hour of our need have the full consolation which is here provided for us; and in the spirit of sonship, which is the spirit of resignation as of obedience, be enabled under every trial to say, "Father, not my will but Thine be done!"

THE LIFE OF CHRIST.

XV.—HIS DENIAL.

ST. MATT. xxvi. 69—75.

“ Now Peter sat without in the palace : and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee. But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest. And when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth. And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man. And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them ; for thy speech bewrayeth thee. Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew. And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out and wept bitterly.”

It was remarked, in speaking of the betrayal of our Lord by Judas, that it was permitted and is recorded not for Jesus' sake only—not only as a circumstance of His humiliation and suffering—but for our sakes also ; as conveying a lesson and warning to His Church, and especially to its Pastors and Rulers, to the end of time : and this is, perhaps, even more

evident with respect to that event which the present Section brings before us—that it is written for the admonition of all His disciples in every age, being intimated by the Lord Himself in the words by which he prefaced the prediction to Simon Peter of his fall, given in St. Luke's account; ch. xxii. 31, 32: "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not; and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren:" (where by "converted" we are to understand "restored" or "recovered:") thus plainly shewing that the lesson was not for him alone.

But while there is this similarity, there is this great difference between the two events—that the one was the act of a *false professor*; of one who followed our Lord from worldly and carnal motives, and under the influence all-through of the ruling passion or propensity which ultimately made him betray Him; while the other was a fall, great indeed and fearful, but, of a *believer*; of a true and sincere disciple of Christ; corresponding to which difference in the character of the transactions is, therefore, the difference of instruction afforded by them.

It will be important, first, to compare the accounts of this transaction as given by the several Evangelists, that we may be fully in possession of the circum-

stances ; after which we shall see the lesson both from the Apostle's fall and recovery.

I. Referring back to the arrest of our Lord in the garden by the band to which Judas acted as guide, we find it written, (ver. 56 of this ch.), "then all the disciples forsook Him and fled." In the next verse but one, however, we observe that Peter had returned as they were leading away Jesus to Caiaphas the High-priest, and "followed Him afar off unto the High-priest's palace:" as did also another of the disciples, the Apostle John ; as he tells us ch. xviii. 15, 16, of his Gospel, where he also explains how they gained admittance—first he himself, and after, by his interest, St. Peter.

1. Thus introduced into the palace or great hall, and either fearing, or not having the same intense concern which moved "the beloved disciple" to follow closer on his Master, he "sat down with the servants to see the end;" that is, at the farther extremity of the hall near to the Porch, at a fire (as the other Evangelists mention) which they had kindled there. And here the first trial of his faith awaited him. He had indeed placed himself in a situation of danger: for, the group of "servants and officers" who had been just engaged in the arrest of Jesus would naturally be talking of Him, and in such terms

of derision as they afterwards uttered when surrounding His cross; and the very silence of Peter would render him suspected even where unknown. But, however this be, one joined the company soon by whom he was at once recognised. "A damsel" (as we here read, ver. 69) "came unto him—she that kept the door," as St. John informs us,—“and earnestly looking on him,” adds St. Luke, “said, “Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee. But he “denied before them all, saying, I know not what “thou sayest.”

The attention of all present was thus drawn upon him, and, as St. John tells us, ch. xviii. 25, while he still “stood and warmed himself, they said therefore “unto him, Art not thou also one of his disciples? “He denied it and said, I am not.” In vain, however, he denied, for (proceeds our Text) another witness now confronted him from the group. “One “of the servants of the high-priest, being his kinsman, whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see “thee in the garden with Him? Peter then denied “again: and immediately the cock crew!” And thus was fulfilled the prophecy of his Lord, at ver. 35, “Verily I say unto thee, That this night *before* “*the cock crow*, thou shalt deny me *thrice*.”

It is strange that he was unmoved by this coincidence: but the reason is, that his fall was not yet

complete nor his Lord's prophecy fulfilled. For, St. Mark particularly states that our Lord had said, "This day, even in this night, before the cock crow *"twice, thou shalt deny me thrice,"* that is, in addition to the former declaration just quoted. And, combining both predictions, we learn that, as the event proved, he was not only to deny Him thrice before the cock crew, but in three different places and on each occasion repeatedly before it should "crow twice." The three times already instanced evidently occurred in the same place, at the fire in the hall, and in the same moment; but the narrative goes on to say,—

2. "And when he was gone out into the porch"—St. Mark says that it was when he went out, or as he was going out into the porch, that the cock crew, (xiv. 68): that is, it would appear, wishing to extricate himself from so unpleasant a position he went out of the hall, and stood in the porch: but while there—"another maid saw him, "and said unto them that were there, This fellow "was also with Jesus of Nazareth. And again he "denied, with an oath, I do not know the man." "And after a little while" (here adds St. Luke) "another (man) saw him, and said, Thou art also of "them. And Peter said, Man, I am not." (St. Luke xxii. 58, *Gr.*)

3. Again he changed his place: for, as St. Luke informs us in continuation, (ver. 59), "About the space of one hour after"—when the examination of our Lord had commenced, he had returned to the hall and advanced so far as to be in view of Him. But he might not so escape temptation;—for here "another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth "this fellow was with Him: for he is a Galilean. "And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest." Upon which, (writes St. Matthew in our Text), "came "unto him they that stood by and said to Peter, "Surely thou also art one of them: for thy speech "bewrayeth thee. Then began he to curse and to "swear, saying, I know not the man: and immediately the cock crew." "And the Lord turned "and looked upon Peter," (St. Luke), "and Peter "remembered the word of Jesus which said unto "him, Before the cock crow thou shalt deny me "thrice. And he went out and wept bitterly." (Text). Here again St. Mark has "before the cock crow *twice*"—telling us that this was the second time: and we have seen how both sayings were fulfilled with sad aggravation of the Apostle's fall and sin.

The circumstances of the case are thus before us, and we now proceed to notice—

II. In the next place, the lesson which it teaches.

1. First, then,—on comparing the present with former incidents in St. Peter's history, we learn the difference between religious *zeal* and fixed religious *principle*: between natural ardour, efficient only in times of excitement, and that calm, collected, steady fortitude which is the fruit of a well-established *faith*: between physical and moral courage even in a true disciple. For, it should be borne in mind that natural disposition and physical temperament have much influence on the christian character; and for this reason—that Regeneration is not the change of the natural or old man but the creation of a new: not the eradication or divesting of the flesh, but the imparting of the Spirit to counteract, conflict with; and subdue it.

Thus, we have abundant evidence that Simon Peter was naturally of a zealous and ardent temperament combined (as it often is) with much self-confidence. For example, while he is the first of the disciples to confess Christ, in answer to His question, "Whom say ye that I am?" (Matt. xvi. 16), which drew from Him the expression of his Lord's marked commendation, in a few verses after we find him incurring His severe rebuke for "savouring the things of men rather than the things of God" in presuming to dissuade Him from His declared purpose to suffer. And again, on another occasion when our Lord stated

the sacrifices to be made in following Him by those who were rich, we read that "Then answered Peter "and said unto Him, Behold, we have forsaken all "and followed Thee: what shall we have therefore?" In check of which too confident boast it was that the Lord uttered the memorable saying—(after first answering his question as regarded the reward of sacrifices made for his sake)—"But many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first." (Matt. xix. 23—30). The incident will also be in our recollection of his demanding of Christ that He should "bid him go to Him" when "walking on the water;" where, that there was more of reliance on his own strength than on faith was proved in his being suffered to sink and brought in the sense of utter helplessness to cry—"Lord save me." (Ib. xiv. 30). And last, his professed readiness to "lay down his life" for his Master (John xiii. 37), and to adhere to Him even though all his fellow disciples should leave Him, ver. 35 of the chapter before us: "Peter "answered and said unto Him, Though all men" (—rather "though all of them," referring to our Lord's prediction ver. 33) "shall be offended because "of Thee, yet will I never be offended:" which made necessary for him that lesson to be learned only by the sad experience of his fall, and by his being, alone of all the disciples, ashamed of Christ,

(or "scandalized," as the word "offended" literally means), even to the denial of Him.

Not, however, that we are to infer that this was the profession of pretended attachment, or even the false boast of one who wanted courage to make good his words: for this he shewed that he possessed in no small degree by his afterwards drawing the sword in Master's defence, and assailing a servant of the High-priest on the occasion of His arrest. Yet he who could thus (as he had said) brave both imprisonment and death, and did draw his sword in the face of a Roman Cohort, was intimidated by an expression of mere sarcasm, and by being held up as an object of ridicule when taunted with his adherence to the despised Jesus of Nazareth by a damsel in the presence of a group of servants. For, that he apprehended no danger from his detection then is evident—not only from the disciples having been let go unmolested when Jesus was taken, and his return with St. John to the hall of judgment, but—from his not attempting an escape when he first found himself recognised. No: the explanation is this, and the lesson to us, that the display of *physical courage* in any cause commands the respect of man, to which on a former occasion St. Peter had shewn too much regard: while he had here to encounter the scorn and contempt of man which nothing but *moral*

courage avails to withstand—that principle which has regard to “the praise of God” alone, and which, being of God, can make the weakest strong, and the most timid brave. *This* he wanted. There was in him no hypocrisy or insincerity—no worldly or self-interested motive—nothing of this: but brave, candid, and warm-hearted, and devoted in his attachment to his Master, he only had one deficiency—the want of knowledge of himself, together with the self-mistrust which that knowledge gives: and which in measure as it is acquired, is the source of the Christian’s strength as, in the same measure, discovering to him his own weakness.

2. Again—We have here a striking example of the progress of sin once yielded to—the danger of “giving place to the Devil.”

We have already noticed the danger to which the Apostle exposed himself in “sitting down in the seat of the scornful.” It was “to see the end;” and we can conceive his justifying this to himself, and even his affected ignorance of his Lord, by the pretext of gathering information useful to both, while his denial of Him could not injure Him. And when discovered and forced to leave, Whither did he go? Not even then from the scene of temptation. Perhaps indeed he could not: for so it mostly happens that when once a temptation is yielded to it is impossible

to retrace our steps: and the consequence is that he determines to go through with what he had begun—till he ends in “cursing and swearing,” and speaking contemptibly of Jesus as “*the Man*!”, and denying Him, not only three times but, thrice three times or oftener!

3. As however said at the beginning—, the Apostle Peter was, not merely a professed disciple of Christ, but a sincere and true believer in Him. This the Lord acknowledged when He said “I have prayed that *thy faith* fail not:” and accordingly he is a not less striking example of a Christian’s repentance than of a Christian’s fall.

The Apostle Paul has said that “Godly sorrow worketh repentance not to be repented of, but the “sorrow of the world worketh death.” It did so—it worked death and ruin in the case of Judas, of whom indeed it is said that “*he repented*:” but the very term there in the original (it is important to note) is different from that used for true and gracious repentance—(μεταμελῶ not μετανοῶ). It is not the saving *change of mind*, but expressive rather of the *remorse* that drove him to his desperate fate. Not so St. Peter’s: “He went out and wept bitterly,” not the tears of remorse, but of contrition; as we know from the cause that made them flow—that which brought him to himself—“*The Lord turned*

and looked on him:" and that "look,"—not of reproach and severity, but remonstrance mingled with compassion and love,—did what it could not fail to do, what it ever does: it melted the heart and made sin to appear in its true light. And the effect we have exemplified in his after character, and especially in his deep *humility* so conspicuous in the affecting scene related in St. John xxi. 15—17, his answer to the question of his Lord, "Simon, Son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?" Which lesson learned, the natural qualities of *the man* sanctified and tempered with this grace, proved eminently valuable in *the Christian and Apostle*.

In conclusion: We might have thought that the case of St. Peter before us was so singular, and the circumstances of his temptation and fall so peculiar, as to admit of no application to us. We have already, however, seen reason to think differently,—that the cases are many in which we may be tempted as he was,—(Would that we had not reason to add!) —many in which we have fallen as he did. They are indeed too numerous to mention: suffice it therefore to say—

If at any time we find ourselves like St. Peter in society where our most holy faith and religion, or our principles learned from it, are made the subject of scorn or ridicule, and we are silent: then

do we deny Christ as he did—as he did in the first instance.

Or, If by the same powerful engine in the hands of the god of this world, we are lured to the commission of sins which our conscience condemns, or dissuaded from forsaking those of which we have repented: then do we deny Him as did he on the second and subsequent occasions. .

Or, If in compliance with a fashionable Latitudinarianism, we would appear less religious than we are, or are ashamed of the strictness of our principles: then again we deny Christ, and as effectually as in words—as if we said with Peter “I know not the Man!”

May the thought of how often we have done so, humble us effectually, as it did the Apostle, and lead us to seek the mercy which he found, and which awaits every returning disciple, as well as every repentant sinner!

THE LIFE OF CHRIST.

XVI.—HIS TRIAL.

ST. LUKE xxii. 66—xxiii. 3.

“And as soon as it was day, the elders of the people, and the chief priests, and the scribes, came together, and led him into their council, saying, Art thou the Christ? tell us. And he said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe: and if I also ask you, ye will not answer me, nor let me go. Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God. Then said they all, Art thou then the Son of God? And he said unto them, Ye say that I am. And they said, What need we any further witness? for we ourselves have heard of his own mouth.”

“And the whole multitude of them arose, and led him unto Pilate. And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cesar, saying that he himself is Christ a King. And Pilate asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answered him and said, Thou sayest it.”

WE have already seen that those who arrested Jesus (it being then about midnight) “brought Him into the High-priest’s house,” (ver. 54), where they waited for day to assemble the council; and where, meantime, he was subjected to all manner of indignity by the soldiers who guarded Him; who “mocked

“ Him and smote Him : and when they had blind-folded Him, they struck Him on the face and asked Him, saying, Prophecy, who is it that smote thee ? “ And many other things blasphemously spake they “ against Him.” (ver. 63—65). And thus we are brought to the next Event connected with His Passion, namely, His TRIAL,—an event the importance of which it is impossible duly to estimate : inasmuch as in very deed it may be said, that, not Christ, but the Truth which He came to reveal, the object of our Faith, was for trial ; and on the issue was suspended, not His life only, but the life of the world,—of all for whom He came to give that life a sacrifice.

It should be observed, then, in order clearly to understand this transaction and its momentous results, that, (as briefly stated in the section now read), our blessed Redeemer was arraigned and tried two different times, before two different tribunals, and on two quite distinct charges : which accordingly will require our separate attention. And—

I. First, as this Evangelist proceeds to tell us in the verse next following those just quoted—“ As “ soon as it was day the Elders of the people and “ the Chief-priests and the Scribes came together,

"and led him into their council," . . . that is, the great council of the nation called "The Sanhedrim," as the Original reads for the word "Council:" and here we are presented in their very first proceeding with an awful specimen of the extent to which opposition to the Truth can harden the heart, the lengths in iniquity to which resistance to the Light may lead men,—in the fact of this august council, assembled under the show of administering justice, actually seeking false witnesses against the victim of their malicious prosecution, as supplied by the narrative of St. Matthew ch. xxvi. 59—61: "Now the chief priests and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus to put Him to death; but found none: yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none. At the last came two false witnesses, and said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days." But neither did these two last agree, as St. Mark observes (ch. xiv. 58, 59)—giving different versions of His words and neither of them the true one; and thus the Sanhedrim were only fulfilling unconsciously the Prophecy of Ps. xxxv. 11, in which the Saviour says—"False witnesses did rise up: they laid to my charge things that I knew not." In vain also, we find, did the High-priest endeavour to induce our Lord to reply to those

charges: "And the High-priest arose and said unto Him, Answerest thou nothing? What is it which these witness against thee?" They carried with them their own refutation, and therefore "Jesus held his peace." (St. Matt. *ib.* 62, 63).

Foiled in this conspiracy, the High-priest now has recourse to a measure which he knew was likely to draw forth from Himself a confession upon which to found an accusation: "And the High-priest" (continues St. Matthew) "answered and said unto Him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ (i.e. the Messiah) the Son of God." This form of address (it may be mentioned) was equivalent to putting a person upon oath; besides which, the question in this instance relating—not to a false accusation, but—to the Truth, the solemn appeal thus made would afford to Jesus the opportunity he would have desired of bearing His testimony to it; as he afterwards said to Pilate—"To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world that I should bear witness to THE TRUTH." He therefore answers at once and explicitly: "Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said;"—"It is even so: I am the Messiah, the Son of God." But He goes farther: "Nevertheless" or (as we should read) "*Moreover* I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on

"the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds
 "of heaven:" an allusion to the well-known Prophecy
 of Daniel, ch. vii. 13, 14, upon which the Jews
 grounded their expectation of the Messiah's appear-
 ing with the signs of glory and majesty—"I saw in
 "the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of
 "man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to
 "the Ancient of days, and they brought him near
 "before him. And there was given him dominion,
 "and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations,
 "and languages, should serve him: his dominion is
 "an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away,
 "and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."
 "Then" (proceeds the Evangelist) "the High-priest
 "rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blas-
 "phemy; what further need have we of witnesses?
 "behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy. What
 "think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty
 "of death:" (Matt. xxvi. 65, 66): or as in St.
 Luke—our Text—more briefly to the same effect,
 "Then said they all, Art thou then the Son of God?
 "And he said unto them, Ye say that I am. (Ye
 "say truly). And they said, What need we any
 "further witness? for we ourselves have heard of
 "his own mouth."

Thus ended the first Trial—the first charge and
 the verdict upon it: the charge, that "He made

himself the Son of God;" upon which He is pronounced guilty of "Blasphemy" and sentenced to death, as stated by the Jews again, John xix. 7, "We have a law and by our law he ought to die *because he made himself* THE SON OF GOD;" alluding to the law against blasphemy Lev. xxiv. 16. In other words—He was condemned for asserting His DIVINITY, as the council understood His confession and as He evidently wished them to understand it. For, though in the Jewish Scriptures both angels and men had been styled "sons of God" (e.g. Job xxviii. 7; Hos. i. 10, &c.), as are Christians now upon still higher grounds, the Jews rightly considered the title, "THE Son of God," as assumed by Christ, not only an assertion of the Messiah-ship, but of Divinity: as we see from St. John v. 17, 18, where, on Jesus saying in reference to His healing on the Sabbath, "*My Father* worketh hitherto and I work," it is added—"Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, "*making himself equal with God.*" This, then, was conclusively proved by His Trial: for had not our Lord intended so much by the Title, this was the time to have disclaimed the pretension and corrected the mistake under which His Judges laboured. He did not so however: He acquiesced in the charge

and in the sense in which they preferred it; and therefore, as said the council with one accord—"What need we any further witness? for we ourselves have heard of his own mouth"—so say we, and with joy and gratitude, that *we* need no further witness: and that **THE TRUTH** is thus established which is the corner stone of Christianity and the foundation of the whole work of our Redemption; inasmuch as it is because He was "The Son of God" in such sense as was no creature whether man or angel, that He could *volunteer* to take "the form of a servant" and in that form to become "obedient unto death" for us, for the effecting of our justification and the remission of our sins: while it was in virtue of the same Title and Prerogative that He burst the bands of death and became in His resurrection the Author of "Life and Immortality:" "made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and determined to be the SON OF GOD with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." (Rom. i. 3, 4, *Gr.* and *Marg.*)

II. But the Trial of Jesus was not yet ended, nor the whole testimony yet borne to "The Truth" to which he was a Martyr. "The whole multitude of them arose," (proceeds the narrative—Luke xxiii. 1,) "and led Him unto Pilate."

The question will occur here—Why the Jews, after this verdict had, did not at once proceed to put Jesus to death, as shortly afterwards we find them doing in the case of St. Stephen when tried and condemned by this same Council, and on the same charge—that of blasphemy, though in a lesser degree? And expositors are for the most part agreed in receiving the reason assigned by the Jews themselves to Pilate as the true one, namely, that “it was not lawful for them to put any man to death,” (John xviii. 31); in which view the death of St. Stephen must be regarded as an illegal, unpremeditated, and tumultuary proceeding. Independent, however, of other evidence which makes this their statement more than doubtful, I would say that the case of St. Stephen is decisive of the contrary, marked as it is by all the formalities of a most deliberate and, in the *manner* of his death, strictly legal proceeding: and I would suggest, therefore, that the real reason may be found in the fear of the people which we have already heard expressed on the part of the chief priests and scribes, taken in connexion with its being the time of the Feast, when the greatest number of those who had witnessed the works of Jesus were in Jerusalem, and with the demonstration the multitude had already made in His favour but a few days before. But, whatever

their policy in demanding another Trial, *we* know a cause which fully accounts for it—even that they might unwittingly fulfil the Scriptures and the prophecies of Christ himself, and so be “taken in their own craftiness.” For our Lord (it will be remembered) had predicted that he should be delivered to the Gentiles to be put to death, (Matt. xx. 17—19); —“And Jesus, going up to Jerusalem, took the “twelve disciples apart in the way, and said unto “them, Behold we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son “of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests, “and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him “to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles to “mock, and to scourge, and to crucify Him: and the “third day He shall rise again:” and, moreover, the death awarded by the Jewish Law to blasphemy (of which they accused him) was stoning; whereas it was needful that he should be crucified, and so, even in this particular, “made a curse for us,” as the Apostle says, Gal. iii. 13—“Christ hath redeemed us from “the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us; “as it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth “on a tree;” and as He had also in express words predicted in the Prophecy just quoted: and crucifixion was not a Jewish but a Roman mode of execution. *This* is the true reason, and a reason why on this occasion the Jews disclaimed the power, (as indeed

the Evangelist who records the disclaimer, adds—
“The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful
“for us to put any man to death : *that the saying of*
“*Jesus might be fulfilled which he spake, signifying*
“*what death he should die*”) : which shews how vain
are the plans and imaginations of men against the
Lord—that “the wrath of man shall praise him” and
His enemies must fulfil His will.

To proceed :—Brought before another tribunal
another charge is preferred,—that He said He was
“The king of the Jews.” “And (adds our Text) they
“began to accuse Him, saying, We found this fellow
“perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute
“to Cesar, saying that he himself is Christ a King.
“And Pilate asked Him, saying, Art thou the King
“of the Jews? And he answered him and said, thou
“sayest it :” the charge upon which, we know, He
was ultimately condemned and which was affixed to
His cross—“JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE
JEWS.” This indeed (it may be thought) is of little
importance, except as it bears on the peculiar preju-
dices of His accusers, and was their pretext for giving
Him up to the Roman power as one disaffected to
the state : and many there are who, when we would
claim for it more particular attention and greater
importance, are ready to say with Gentile Pilate, “Am
I a Jew?” “How does this Title concern me a

Gentile Christian?" or, with the Jews, "Write not the King of the Jews," but some other title more distinctive of the event and the common concern of mankind at large in it: an evidence of which feeling we have in the circumstance of the Monogram IHS (signifying "Jesus the Saviour of mankind" as written in the Latin language) having been adopted universally by Gentile Christians instead of INRI the Monogram of the actual inscription on the cross in the same language; as though this latter title were to us irrelevant. And yet, the fact that in the Providence of God, so conspicuous in the ordering of every minutest circumstance of this eventful transaction, this inscription should have been permitted—that it should have been proclaimed as the Saviour's accusation—"written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin" to be read by witnesses from every nation under heaven; which moreover Pilate—himself an unconscious and involuntary witness to it—could not be induced to alter, saying, "what I have written I have written:" these considerations should surely lead us to conclude that a truth is here declared of deeper import and more general concern than is commonly believed—of equal concern to the Gentile and to mankind with the kingdom of Christ itself.

And this inference is confirmed by the testimony of all the Prophecies from the beginning, which

represent the Kingdom of Christ, the promised Messiah, to be "the Kingdom of Israel"—the King, the "Son of David," the true Solomon, sitting on David's throne—and "the place of His throne" and centre of His dominion "Mount Zion" and "Jerusalem." Time would fail to quote these; but some of them have already come under our notice in former discourses of this Series: as, for instance, when contemplating the visit of the Eastern Magi at His birth who came to Jerusalem inquiring for Him under this very Title—"Where is He that is born KING OF THE JEWS?"—we were irresistibly carried forward to the period predicted in the 2nd Psalm, when to Him, "set as King on the holy hill of Zion, the nations "shall be given for His inheritance and the utmost "parts of the earth for His possession:" or in the yet more appropriate Prophecy of Ps. lxxii. when, in the character of Solomon and as his Antitype, it is written of Him—"The kings of Tarshish and of the "isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and "Seba shall offer gifts. Yea all kings shall fall "down before Him; all nations shall serve Him." And again, when at His Presentation He was announced as the Salvation of God destined to be at once "a Light to lighten the Gentiles and the Glory "of His people Israel." And again, more recently, when, just before His Passion, in asserting His

Kingly Title by His triumphant entry into Jerusalem, we saw that the Prophecy in accordance with which this was done, and which foretold His coming as King to the "daughter of Zion," goes on to say that *in that same character* "He shall speak peace to the heathen; and His dominion shall be from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth;" (Zech. ix. 10 with 9): and *at the same time*, as (to quote one more Prophecy) we read in Jeremiah ch. iii. 17, "At that time"—the time when Israel "shall no more say, The ark of the covenant of the Lord, neither shall it come to mind, neither shall they remember it, neither shall they visit it, neither shall that be done any more (ver. 16)—*at that time* they shall call Jerusalem *the throne of the Lord*; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart."

And again we repeat the question which we put on these several occasions—Has this been yet? He came indeed and claimed the Title and it was given Him in mockery. "They stripped Him and put on Him a scarlet robe, and when they had platted a crown of thorns they put it on His head and a reed in His right hand; and they bowed the knee before Him, and mocked Him, saying, Hail, King

“ of the Jews.” And Jews and Gentiles conspired to do this, and in this character and under this Title to reject and crucify Him. But the time will come when both shall acknowledge Him by it—when a King of Israel shall receive the homage of the world; and then shall be understood, and not till then, the deep significance and comprehensive import of the superscription of the cross !

In fine—in these two Titles, under which Jesus was arraigned and tried and condemned, are comprised all the promises of God in Him to man—all the blessings of which He is the author in redemption, the Heavenly and the Earthly, to the Church and to the World. The heavenly calling and spiritual blessings to the Church in the Title “The Son of God:” the earthly or national blessings to the World in the Title “The King of Israel:” the whole Truth to which He came to bear witness, and to which He died a martyr. Do we receive the whole? Do we acknowledge Him by both Titles? Do we say, in unfeigned faith with Nathaniel—“ Rabbi, Thou art *the Son of God*: Thou art *the King of Israel*.” For it is needful that we should confess both, the latter as well as the former; not only lest we should be found taking from the head of Christ one of His many crowns—and that one which peculiarly involves His Glory as “Son of Man”—but, lest we should

be in so far partakers even now of the sin of those who condemned and crucified Him on this count, and join issues with them against the Lord and against His Anointed :—opposing, it may be, our views of the Kingdom of Christ, and our plans of establishing it, to the views of it given us in Scripture, and to the purpose and counsel of God—to the “Decree” which says, and which shall surely be executed, “YET HAVE I SET MY KING UPON MY HOLY HILL OF ZION.”

May the Lord now and always vouchsafe to us His promised “Spirit of Truth” to “lead us into ALL the Truth;” and “Unto Him who loved us and “washed us from our sins in His own blood, and “hath made us kings and priests unto God, even His “Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever “and ever. Amen.”

THE LIFE OF CHRIST.

XVII.—HIS CRUCIFIXION.

ST. JOHN xix. 30.

“When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, He said, It is finished: and He bowed His head and gave up the ghost.”

“IT IS FINISHED:” This was the Redeemer’s expiring declaration. One more sentence only he uttered, supplied by St. Luke’s narrative, who says, ch. xxiii. 46,—“And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, He said, Father into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, He gave up the ghost”—“He yielded up the spirit.”*

It is then a declaration memorable on this account: and yet more so, when we come to reflect on its pregnant import: for truly never was so much comprised in so few words—in one word, (Τετέλειται), in the reference with which it was uttered; which we

* *ἔτελει*, only of the death of Christ, here and St. Mark xv. 37, 39.

are not left to conjecture as it is told us in the verse but one preceding—"After this Jesus knowing "that all things were now accomplished"—or "were finished," the same word, (τετέλειται)—"that the "Scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. Now "there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they "filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon "hyssop, and put it to his mouth. When Jesus "therefore had received the vinegar"—this last remaining particular of the prophecies which had so minutely detailed His sufferings being fulfilled—"He said, It is finished." That is, the end for which He came into the world, the object for which He humbled Himself even to the death of the cross, was answered; the work of man's redemption was completed.

To this inspired comment on the words, we can add nothing in the way of exposition—nothing is needed. We can only direct attention to the application of this emphatic saying; to the several parts of the work which it thus pronounces "finished;" to the Redemption in its various aspects: that so, more fully comprehending the blessed consequences of the fact, we may, with the Divine blessing, be duly affected by it, and our thankfulness to God, 'the Father of all mercies,' for this His 'inestimable love' be proportionably increased.

REDEMPTION—the redemption of man and of the world was then accomplished,—

I. In the first place, as regards the Power-of *The Enemy* by whom Man in his natural state, in consequence of his Fall, is enslaved, even “Satan”—“The Adversary,” as this name signifies: an object and effect of the redemption not always taken into account in estimating that glorious work, though suggested by the term itself, which implies *deliverance* or *emancipation*. For, it should be remembered that man did not fall of his own mere act, uninfluenced and uncontrolled. No: His ruin was compassed and effected by a “subtle,” adversary, thence called “the Serpent” as well as “Satan,” whose hatred of God and of His creature man is veiled in mystery: a circumstance in man’s favour, we might have ventured to hope, as compared with the guilt of that Evil One himself, and of the angels “which kept not their first estate but left their own habitation.” *He* “deceived” and “beguiled” by the Tempter: *they* self-tempted, self-willed, self-acting.

And accordingly, not only is Man the object of mercy while to them is given no hope; but his redemption is from the first announced as the deliverance of one enslaved and oppressed; and the

Redeemer as his Avenger from the power of His Enemy. Thus, for example, the curse is primarily directed to the Serpent, the principal in the transgression and its first cause:—"And the LORD God said unto the Serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, &c.;" while the promise of a Saviour to the victim of his malice and deceit is in the form of a judgment on him—the promise of one to come from her whose weakness he had practised on, "a seed of the woman," who should "bruise his head" and so "destroy" him. (Gen. iii. 14, 15).

2. But, how was this to be done? Not in the first instance by *power*: for it was not by superior power that Satan had triumphed. He had triumphed by seducing man to sin, and so obtained a legal right and power over his captive: getting the Law on his side which said "Thou shalt surely die," and availing himself (as he still ever seeks to do) of the word and truth of God. And by like means must he be met and defeated. In the way of Law must he be deprived of the power which by Law he thus held: which is the meaning of that inestimably precious passage of Scripture, Heb. ii. 14, 15—"Forasmuch as the children" (those whom Christ would make children of God) "are partakers of flesh and blood, He also himself likewise took part

"of the same; that *through death He might destroy him that had the power of death*, that is the Devil; "and deliver them who through fear of death were "all their life-time subject to bondage."

Whence it is that we saw the Redeemer so soon as He entered on His mission, as His first act, encountering the Enemy of Man on this *moral ground*—"led up into the wilderness to be tempted of the Devil:" who, then defeated, "left Him" (as we have seen) "for a season," returning again and again to the attack: at one time, doubtless, taking advantage again of His infirmities, when He hungered and thirsted, and was weary, and "had not where to lay His head:" at another, bringing His power in the world to bear against Him in varied forms of persecution and "contradiction of sinners;" and at last, as at Gethsemane, putting forth all that his "power of death"—investing death with all its horrors—to scare Him from His work of submission, as man and for man, to the Divine Will. But all was now over: the conflict is ended: the Second Adam has been tried and fully proved, and His own words are verified in the end as at the beginning—"The Prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me." Righteousness has triumphed: "the prey is taken from the mighty and the lawful captive is delivered:" Man's freedom is accomplished: "IT IS FINISHED."

II. But man needed more than this—more than deliverance from the power of his enemy, more than to be avenged of his wrong. He needed reconciliation to God. For he had sinned. He was not only unfortunate but guilty: and his guilt must be atoned for. He had incurred a debt to the Divine justice and had forfeited his life to the Divine Law: and therefore in order that he be saved he must be *ransomed* as the term “Redemption” also denotes. The sentence must be expiated—the forfeit must be paid—by Him who would undertake for him.

Not that God was wanting in mercy to remit the sentence and forgive freely. No: “God is love,” and was so from the beginning, eternally; of which the fall of man and the entrance of sin was to afford a new proof unknown before even to angels: and, of this His own love He pitied and compassionated the state of His fallen creatures—not moved to compassion (let it be again and again repeated) by the sacrifice of His Son, who is not more truly “one with the Father” in nature than in this, which is indeed the nature of God, even “Love,”—Love to sinners. But mercy even in the Almighty cannot be exercised at the expense of justice: the authority and the righteousness of the Law must be vindicated, and Sin must be marked with the Divine abhorrence and displeasure.

And this too was done when Jesus, "the Holy One and the Just," bowed His head and expired—expired beneath the curse of man's transgression. The forfeited life was laid down by one who could volunteer the sacrifice: the ransom was paid in full: "Forasmuch as ye know (says St. Peter 1st Ep. i. "18, 19) that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold from your vain conversation received by tradition" (that is "transmitted" or "handed-down") "from your fathers"*—the sinful nature inherited by all from Adam;—"but with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." And this done—the victim being slain and the precious blood shed—again the Saviour proclaims from His cross, "IT IS FINISHED."

There is "an END of sins" in that "reconciliation" has been made "for iniquity," in the language of the ancient prophecy of Daniel ch. ix. 24: in that Christ "has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself:" by His "one offering"—(demonstrated to be sufficient by its being but "once offered")—having obtained for those who believe in Him perfect "remission" of sins, so as to blot them (as it were) out of the book of the Divine remembrance; as we have heard in the well chosen Epistle for this day, Heb. x. 1—18.

* παραπαλιόν

And there is an "END of the Law" as an instrument of condemnation, in that He has answered completely all its requirements: as saith the Apostle, Rom. x. 4, "Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness (*or* justification) to every one that believeth." Yea, "to every one;" for, as he had said before ch. v. of the same Epistle,—“As by the “offence of ONE judgment came upon *all men* to “condemnation; even so by the righteousness of “ONE the free gift came upon *all men* unto justification of life:” the sin of the first Adam fully met by the obedience of the second, and with co-extensive results—the reconciling of the world; the removal, and universally, of the judicial barrier interposed by the Fall to the restoration of man and his acceptance with God: as it is written 2 Cor. v. 19—“God was “in Christ *reconciling the world* to Himself, not “imputing their trespasses unto them. . . For, “He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew “no sin, that we might be made the righteousness “of God in Him.”

III. Again and lastly—this dying declaration of the Redeemer was verified in that “the Scriptures” concerning this His work “were fulfilled.”

Type and Prophecy had combined from the beginning—even from the fall—to promise a Saviour to

man: and by these were faith and hope cherished during the ages that elapsed before He was revealed. But they were now to serve another purpose no less important. They were to witness that He had come—that Jesus was “The Christ,” the Saviour promised and appointed by God: without which testimony He might have done and suffered all, and still the question remain unanswered—“Art thou He that should come or look we for another?” Whence we find the notice so frequent in His history, and especially in the narrative of His sufferings and death, that “the Scriptures were fulfilled.” And so now that every minutest circumstance that had been predicted had occurred—even to their parting His raiment among them and casting lots for His seamless vesture,—we read that “Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled saith, I thirst.” And this done—having tasted of that which this same Scripture had said that they would give Him to drink in aggravation of His sufferings, “vinegar mingled with gall”—He said, “IT IS FINISHED: and He bowed His head and gave up the ghost.”

Such in outline is the import of this Last Word of the Redeemer; and yet we may not say its full import; for, once again, we read, shall that word be uttered.

Not, as here, with the voice of expiring weakness, but with a voice of might—"a loud voice as when a lion roareth," a sound as of the peal of "seven thunders!" the voice of that "mighty Angel" seen in the Apocalyptic vision (Rev. x. 1 and seq.) to "come down from Heaven clothed with a cloud and "a rainbow upon his head, and his face as it were "the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire;" who "set "his right foot upon the sea and his left foot on the "earth . . . and sware by Him that liveth "for ever and ever, who created Heaven and the "things that therein are, and the earth and the "things that therein are, and the sea and the things "which are therein, That there should be time—" (there should be delay)—no longer: but in the "days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he "shall begin to sound, **THE MYSTERY OF GOD SHOULD "BE FINISHED**, as He hath declared to His servants "the prophets:" when that which is now redeemed by *ransom* shall be redeemed by *power*, as we learn from the Event—the sounding of this "seventh Angel"—in the following chapter ver. 15: "And "the seventh Angel sounded, and there were great "voices in heaven, saying, The Kingdoms of this "world are become the Kingdoms of our Lord and "of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and "ever." *Then*—when also the seventh and last of

"the vials" shall have been poured out "in which is filled up the wrath of God"—*then* is heard "a great voice out of the temple of heaven from the throne, saying, IT IS DONE," (xvi. 17): the voice, being "from the throne," of the Lord Himself, as further stated chap. xxi. 5,—*"And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold I make all things new. And He said unto me, Write; for these words are true and faithful. And He said unto me, IT IS DONE. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son."*

For this we wait: for, our inheritance, though purchased, is not yet redeemed; though ransomed, is not yet recovered out of the hand of the usurper; as the Apostle saith, speaking of "the Holy Spirit of promise," Ephes. i. 14, "Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession unto the praise of His glory."

And with this earnest we have also the assurance of our hope in this last word of the Redeemer on the cross—"IT IS FINISHED:" for He who then perfected our Title will in due time put in possession: when, as at His first coming He "was once offered to bear the sins of many, unto them that look for Him

“ He shall appear the second time without sin unto “ Salvation ”—salvation in enjoyment, salvation in effect, salvation final and eternal! and when every Promise or Prophecy of “ glory ” shall be as literally fulfilled, without one word falling to the ground, as were the Prophecies of the “ sufferings ” by which it has been obtained.

THE LIFE OF CHRIST.

XVIII.—HIS BURIAL AND DESCENT INTO HELL.

PSALM xvi. 9, 10.

“Therefore My heart is glad, and My glory rejoiceth;

“My flesh also shall rest in hope:

“For Thou wilt not leave My soul in Hell;

“Neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption.”

THIS passage is remarkable as being the most explicit Prophecy of our Lord's Resurrection in the Old Testament Scriptures, and accordingly that one specially dwelt on by the Apostles in their reasonings with the Jews; for example, by St. Peter in his first Discourse, Acts ii. 25—28; and by St. Paul, chap. xiii. 35—37.

But it is not less remarkable as a most distinct revelation of another Truth inseparably connected with His Death and Resurrection, and ranking with them among the daily repeated articles of our Creed as a fact equally certain and undoubted—a link in the chain of events whereby our Redemption was

accomplished, and therefore a fundamental article of faith—though confessed by many (it is to be feared) without attaching any definite meaning to it; namely, *The Descent of Christ into Hell*. For which reason it is selected for our consideration on this Day,* when we commemorate His Burial and lying in the Grave; as it also comes next in order in the Series which in the Season just past has engaged our attention.

Confining ourselves then, on the present occasion, to this the first statement of the Text,—“Thou wilt not leave My soul in Hell”—there are two inquiries which it embraces: First, As to the *Place* to which Christ descended; and Secondly, As to the *Object* of His Descent thither.

I. And First—It should be premised that the word “Hell” does not mean, either in the Creed or in the Text, the place of torment, as it is now commonly applied; but the place of departed spirits in general; in the Original of the New Testament called “*Hades*,” a word which merely denotes *the Invisible world*; which indeed is also the original meaning of the English word “Hell.”†

* Easter Even.

† In the Hebrew “*She-öl*,” the place of those *sought for and not found—the departed*.

A place, it is also very important to note, distinct from the grave, with which some rationalistic Commentators would confound it: else would the Creed repeat the same truth twice successively, confessing first the Burial of Christ and then His Descent into Hell or Hades:—‘He was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into Hell:’ where His *death, burial, and descent into Hell* are evidently particularized as distinct and successive facts. And so in the 3rd of the thirty-nine Articles—‘As Christ died for us, and was buried, so also is it to be believed that He went down into Hell.’

And yet it is a place no less evidently distinct from Heaven; as indicated by the word ‘*descended*’ invariably used with respect to it: while a subsequent Article of the Creed, and the next Article of the thirty-nine, state that ‘He *ascended* into Heaven;’ which last event, moreover, took place (as we know) not on His Death and Burial but after His resurrection.

2. But, again—Both the Creed and the Article plainly imply that it was in the Spirit, in which He still lived though dead as to the body, that He descended to this region: in saying He ‘*was buried*’—buried by others, being passive in that transaction: but that ‘He *descended* into Hades’—He Himself, of His own act: and so the Text, “Thou wilt not

leave *my soul* in Hades; neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption," that is, as to the body or flesh; as the Apostle also marks the distinction in his comment, Acts ii. 31,—“that His *soul* was not left in Hades, neither His *flesh* did see corruption.” To which may be added a remarkable passage in this connexion in St. Paul’s Epistle to the Ephesians chap. iv. 9, 10, where, having quoted the Prophecy of another Psalm which saith—“When He “ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and “gave gifts unto men,” he thus reasons on the word “ascended:”—“Now that He *ascended*, what is it “but that He also *descended* first into the lower parts “of the earth? He that descended is the same also “that ascended up far above all heavens that He “might fill (*marg.* fulfil) all things:” where by “the lower parts of the earth,” (*κατώτερα*), is not meant the earth, but, as the Ancient Commentators generally understood the expression,* “Hades,” the place of separate spirits; which they held to be in the nether regions of the earth, or, as we say, ‘the infernal regions,’ that is, ‘the lower’ (‘descendit in *inferna*’): in confirmation of which we find this phrase (*κατώτατα* and *καταχθονία*) used instead of the word “Hell” in some of the copies of the Greek Creed. ‘And

* See Bp. Pearson on this Article.

‘indeed’ (as the learned Bp. Horsley remarks*) ‘this phrase of “the lower parts of the earth” is in the Greek language so much a name for the central parts of the globe as distinguished from the surface or outside on which we live, that had the Apostle intended by it to denote the inhabited surface of the earth, as lower than the heavens, we may confidently say his Greek converts at Ephesus would not easily have guessed his meaning.’ To which may be added our Lord’s own words in exposition of the type of the prophet Jonas, Matt. xii. 40, “So shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth:” and Rom. x. 7, “Who shall *descend* into the deep? (*Gr. εἰς τὴν ἀβύσσον* “into the abyss”) that is, to *bring up* Christ again from the dead (*ἐκ νεκρῶν*).” And finally, we have the judgment of our Church on this point—that it was in the Spirit Christ went to Hades while His body lay in the grave—in the Epistle for this day, selected from the 3rd chap. of 1st Peter beginning from the 17th verse, in which the Apostle states that He was “put to death in the flesh but quickened by the Spirit: “by which also He went and preached to the spirits “in prison, which sometime were disobedient when “once the long-suffering of God waited in the days “of Noah, while the ark was a-preparing, wherein few,

* Sermon on 1 Pet. iii. 18—20.

“that is eight souls, were saved by water.” . . . Of which passage it must suffice to observe here that it was ‘long considered in the Church as one of the ‘principal foundations of the Catholic belief of ‘Christ’s descent into Hell;’ and as such was quoted and embodied in the 3rd of the thirty-nine Articles already referred to, as first published.*

To this invisible place, then, of the abode of the departed—that place which He has Himself so clearly described in His narrative of the Rich man and Lazarus, with its two separate regions for the saved and the lost, separate though not far distant asunder, which the Jews were wont to call ‘the Paradise’ and ‘the Gehenna’ of ‘Sheol’ or ‘Hades’—thither did our Lord in the Spirit descend on His death: and we now pass to—

II. Our Second Inquiry,—What was the object for

* *Ibid.* *Note*.—We have here an instance of the value of the judgment of the Church as an arbiter between the conflicting decisions of private judgment. This is not the place to discuss the forced interpretation (which may be called the *popular* one) of the passage of St. Peter here referred to, which supposes him to speak of the Spirit preaching by Noah to the antediluvian world: but when members of our Church are found objecting to the literal sense as singular, it may be well to remind them that the Church pronounces decidedly for it in appointing it for the Epistle for Easter Even, where it is altogether out of place except as literally taken.

it is an inestimable comfort to us to think that there too was Christ laid ; by His Burial making the grave to us a bed of rest, and illuminating the dark prison-house of the tomb with the inextinguishable light of the hope of immortality. While, as He entered and left both,—Hades and the Grave—so might those who live by and in Him be assured that they would in due time leave both also. For the one, as the other, owes its existence to sin. “Hades” is a place which never would have existed, or into which the souls of men would never have entered, had not sin introduced “Death,” with which it is associated in Scripture ; and a place from which, therefore, the redeemed must have likewise looked to be delivered by the Lord’s power. To them, indeed, its character, like as that of Death, was changed from the first. It was changed from a place of punishment to a place of “safe-keeping,” (as the word translated “prison” in the passage of St. Peter might be rendered) ‘where they are represented as preserved ‘under the shadow of God’s right hand till the ‘season should arrive for their advancement to their ‘future glory ; as the souls of the wicked, on the ‘other hand, are reserved, in the other division of ‘the same place, unto the judgment of the great day.’ But still “Death and Hell” (or “Hades”) go together ; and He that endured the one entered the other for

our sakes, that He might redeem us from both : as He saith to His disciple—"Fear not ; I am the first "and the last: I am He that liveth and was dead ; "and, behold, I am alive for evermore, and have the "keys of Hades and of Death." (Rev. i. 17, 18, *Gr.*)

2. But, great though be this consolation, it is not the whole. The promise of Christ to His Church—the Church He was about to build and of which the foundation was to be laid by His Apostle Peter—that "the gates of Hades should not prevail against it" (Matt. xvi. 18, *Gr.*) would seem to intend some special privilege for believers under this dispensation with respect to their state after death : some advance in privilege in the invisible world corresponding to their high calling of God in this : some immunity or exemption from the power of Hades other than a future and ultimate deliverance from it which all believers looked for. And such also we find to have been the generally received opinion of the Church in former times—(so general as to be termed by the venerable Bede 'the Catholic faith'*)—that Christ translated the spirits of the faithful from Hades to Heaven as a result of His descent thither ; so fulfilling the Prophecy which had said that "when He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive," or, as the Margin rightly interprets the idiom, "He

* In Bp. Pearson *in loco*.

led (in train) a multitude of captives ;” * since which time Heaven, not Hades, has been the prospect before the Christian at death. For though the body must wait the accomplishment of the number of God’s Elect and the destruction of “ the last enemy, Death :” there is no reason why the spirit released from the body should be detained under his power. Which truth, as is the case with all truly Catholic teaching, is abundantly confirmed by warrant of holy Scripture : for, it was not Hades that was opened to the view of the dying Stephen, (the first Christian whose death is recorded in Scripture), when he said, “ Behold, I see the heavens opened “ and the Son of Man standing on the right hand “ of God.” Neither was it Hades St. Paul had in contemplation when he said “ I desire to depart and be with Christ :” for, Hades no longer detains the spirit, no more than the grave the body, of the Saviour. Nor again was it in Hades that St. John, on the opening of the fifth seal, “ saw the souls of them “ that were slain for the word of God and for the “ testimony which they held ;” or from which their voice was heard to cry “ How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood ;”—but “ under the altar” in Heaven, as those who had been “ offered up” (as St. Paul says of

* Ephes. iv. 8.

his own death) having given their lives a sacrifice unto God. Nor, lastly, is it from Hades that the goodly army is seen to issue forth which follows the Redeemer when He comes forth at His second appearing in the character of "KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS." No: "I saw" (says the Apostle speaking in vision)—"I saw *Heaven opened*, and "behold a white horse, and He that sat upon him "was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness "He doth judge and make war. . . . And the "armies *which were in heaven* followed him upon "white horses clothed in fine linen white and clean." (Rev. xix). Not the angels—but, as proved by their description, "the great multitude which no man could "number, of (out of) all nations, and kindreds, and "people, and tongues" whom he had before seen (ch. vii.) "*standing before the throne*, clothed in white "robes, and palms in their hands;" waiting the day of the Redeemer's rising up in His power, to come with Him and share His triumph.*

* The language of our Burial Service is also distinct on this point, saying, 'Almighty God *with whom* do live the spirits of 'them that depart hence in the Lord, and *with whom* the souls of 'the faithful, after they are delivered from the burden of the 'flesh, are in joy and felicity:' while, on the other hand, it steers clear of the opposite extreme of error into which many Protestants have fallen—of asserting that the intermediate state is one of perfected bliss and glory, which is to make void the hope of

Yes: in this most literal sense, and even now, has Christ ‘opened the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers.’ We protest against the doctrine which represents the state after death to be a state of suffering or Purgatory—an error grafted on the truth respecting Hades: but we should reject also the kindred error (not indeed so dangerous) of many Protestants who hold that Hades is still the destination of the spirit of the believer: although in so doing we are compelled to differ from an authority oftenest safe to follow—namely that of the learned Prelate just quoted, who concludes his clear exposition of the passage of St. Peter, the Epistle for the day, by saying—‘thither (unto Hades) shall the soul of every believer in Christ descend.’ This was once true of all, even of the redeemed; but it is no longer so: and would we know the blessing consequent—would we know the import of what we confess when we say in the creed ‘He descended into Hell’—how much we are indebted to this fact, let us but compare the language and feelings of the

our Lord’s Second Advent: adding in the sequel of the same Prayer,—‘that it may please Thee, of Thy gracious goodness, ‘shortly to accomplish the number of Thine elect, *and to hasten Thy kingdom*; that we, with all those that have departed in the ‘true faith of Thy holy name, may have our *perfect consummation and bliss*, both in body and soul, in thy eternal and everlasting *glory*.’

dying Christian with those who were called hence under a less favoured dispensation. Let us compare the language of the Apostle "desiring to depart and be with Christ," reconciled only to life by the profit to others and to the church from his remaining, with the wail of Hezekiah—and he a believer and true servant of God—when told to "set his house in order, for that he must die and not live:" his craving of an extension of his time on earth—saying as in Isaiah xxxviii. 10, 11—"In the cutting off of my days, "I shall go to the gates of the grave (*Heb.* Hades): I "am deprived of the residue of my years. I said, I "shall not see the Lord, even the Lord, in the land of "the living: I shall behold man no more with the "inhabitants of the world." True: in Hades the Lord was not to be seen. But this is pre-eminently now the Christian's hope in death, that he shall see the Lord and in the land of the living—while he can say with the Saviour in the words of the Psalm from which our text is taken, "Thou shalt shew me the "path of life; in Thy presence is fulness of joy; "at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore."

In conclusion—I have thus endeavoured to throw light on an Article of our creed which, I fear, is but little understood: and, if I have at all succeeded, may I hope that in confessing it in future, in enumerating, among all the facts which we

believe of the Saviour Jesus Christ—His Birth, His Sufferings, His Crucifixion, His Death, His Burial, His Resurrection and Ascension,—this additional one, that *He descended into Hell*, we may see in this another instance of His redeeming *power*, and withal another proof of His redeeming *Love*; and so an additional ground of praise and thanksgiving, and of joy in Him as our SALVATION.

THE LIFE OF CHRIST.

XIX.—HIS RESURRECTION.

PSALM xvi. 10.

“Thou wilt not leave My soul in Hell ;

“Neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption.”

IN a former discourse on this passage it was observed that it is a Prophecy of two Events which rank among the Articles of the creed of the Catholic Church ; namely, ‘The Descent of Christ into Hell’ and ‘His Resurrection from the dead.’ and having then inquired into the import of the former as stated in the first clause,—“Thou wilt not leave my soul in Hell” (or “Hades”), we are now to consider the latter as stated in the second,—“Neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption ;” the subject of this Day’s commemoration.*

And here again there are two distinct particulars to be noticed : First—The assigned cause of our Lord’s Resurrection: and, Secondly, The benefits

* Easter Sunday.

consequent to the believers of this fundamental doctrine of our Religion.

I. First—The cause or reason of the Saviour's Resurrection, here assigned, forcibly impresses on us a Truth of which His whole history is an illustration, and therefore more than once dwelt on in this Series,—that the work of our redemption from beginning to end is a *moral work*; the vindication and triumph of RIGHTEOUSNESS, as was the Fall of Man the work and triumph of SIN. Of this truth the demonstration (we have seen) commenced with His Baptism and His Temptation immediately subsequent—was carried through His whole life, exemplified in His every word and deed—and was finally established by His Trial and Death:—witnessed by His Betrayer who said, “I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood:” witnessed by His judge, in the repeated declaration of Pilate, “I find no fault in Him:” who, moreover, “when he saw that “he could prevail nothing, took water and washed “his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person; see ye to it:” witnessed by the malefactor crucified with Him, who said of himself and his fellow malefactor—“we indeed justly” (are in this condemnation), “for we “receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man

"hath done nothing amiss:" and finally, at the cross, by "the Centurion and those that were with him," who, "when they saw the things that were done, "feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of "God,"—"Certainly this was a righteous man." While in this same fact is ever made to consist the efficacy of His atonement—in that "He died, *the* "just for the unjust, that He might bring us to "God,"—"redeemed with the precious blood of "Christ, as of a Lamb *without blemish and without "spot."*

And so here, the cause of His resurrection is His *Holiness*: "Thou wilt not suffer Thine HOLY ONE to see corruption:" a Title which also conveys the source and principle of His righteousness in the flesh—that it was the Spirit of God, in virtue of whose operation (we have seen) He was pronounced "holy" from His birth by the Angel who announced His miraculous conception:—"The Holy Ghost shall "come upon thee and the power of the Highest shall "overshadow thee: *therefore* also that *Holy thing* "which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son "of God." In the power of which Spirit (it will also be remembered) He entered on His conflict with the Tempter and overcame: and through which,— "through the Eternal Spirit"—ever energizing His humanity as a principle of new, Divine, and

heavenly life, He in the end "offered Himself without spot to God." (Heb. ix. 14.) *This* it was that constituted the impossibility of His being holden of death, as well as of His being detained in "Hades" which, (as lately shewn) is a condition of humanity connected with death: as the Apostle Peter says, Acts ii. 24, "Whom God hath raised up, "having loosed the pains (*or* bands) of death: "because it was not possible that He should be "holden of it;" which he proceeds to shew by reference to this Psalm:—"For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my "my face; for he is on my right hand, that I should "not be moved: therefore did my heart rejoice, and my "tongue was glad; moreover also, my flesh shall rest "in hope: because thou wilt not leave my soul in "hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see "corruption." Observe—"Whom God hath raised up;" (as again frequently—ver. 32; and iii. 15; and xiii. 30, &c.):—to mark that His resurrection was a *judicial* act, and not the exertion of His own Divine power to raise Himself. This, indeed, He could have done: as He could by the same power have saved himself from death, and defeated all the attempts of the Enemy. But, having vouchsafed to undertake for man and become his surety, He went through with the work of mercy, and volunteered to

be released, as He had volunteered to be imprisoned, for those who were Death's lawful captives : released in testimony to His righteousness,—the complete demonstration that He, whom they had rejected and crucified as a malefactor, and who "was numbered with transgressors," was "THE HOLY ONE and THE JUST:" (Acts iii. 15).

2. And further,—As this, "the Spirit of holiness," was the cause of the Saviour's righteousness in the flesh and thence of His resurrection from the dead, morally or judicially speaking ; so was it also of the glorious transformation of the flesh or bodily nature which then took place in Him. Not now mortal as before : for, "Christ being raised from the dead "dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over "Him." And wherefore? Not only because He had paid the debt of man's nature in dying the death of the forfeited life—the Adamic life forfeited by sin ; but because He was raised in the power of another life emphatically His own—"the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus"—which had never been man's and never had been forfeited ; and which He asserted not before, but (as it were) held in suspense or abeyance, together with all His Divine prerogatives, that He might expiate "the wages of sin." Whence, as the Apostle says 2 Cor. v. 16,—“Though we “have known Christ after the flesh, yet now hence-

“forth know we Him no more.” Not that He is no longer in the body: for as our ivth Article rightly states—‘Christ did truly rise again from death and took again His body, with flesh, bones, and all things appertaining to the perfection of man’s nature; wherewith He ascended into Heaven. . . .’ But He took again the body quickened with a new life to which it is now conformed—no longer “a natural” but “a spiritual body;” that is, no longer conformed to “the living soul” or natural Adamic life of man, but to “the quickening spirit” of which He, as “the Second Adam” and “the Lord from Heaven,” is the source and Head; (as the same Apostle teaches in the xvth ch. of his 1st Epistle to the Corinthians):—the full import of the words of our Text, “Thou wilt not suffer thine HOLY ONE “to see corruption,” as it respects the Redeemer Himself: and we are now to consider—

II. In the Second place—the results implied, or consequent blessings to the redeemed.

These are two, corresponding to the twofold aspect of the resurrection of Christ as just contemplated. And—

1. First—As in its *judicial* aspect we have seen that His resurrection was His discharge from under “the Law of sin and death” to which He had volun-

teered subjection for our sakes, and the demonstration of His perfect righteousness, so was it the evidence that our redemption was accomplished; and the sure pledge of the justification—the like discharge from under the same law—of all who believe in and hold their Title to life from Him: as it is written—“who was delivered for (*or on account of*) our offences, and was raised again for (*or on account of*) our justification:” (Rom. iv. 25). And what a blessing this! To man, a sinner and under condemnation, a legal release, an answer to every charge! as we read in the same Epistle,—the triumphant challenge of the Apostle, ch. viii. 33, 34, “Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, “that is risen again.” . . . “Rather that is risen”—because but for his having been raised again, He had died as other men; had lain under the power of death and not expiated our sin: but, being raised, His death is proved to have made perfect atonement for it.

2. But great as is this blessing there is yet a greater which flows to us from the Resurrection of Christ. For, the Scriptures teach that, not only was He raised *for us*, but, that we are raised *with Him*. And this even now, by communication of the

same "Spirit of life" in the power of which He was raised: as we read in Ephesians ii. 4—6, "But God "who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith "He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, *hath* "*quicken**ed us together with Christ.* . . . and "*hath raised us up together*, and made us sit "together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus;" the full experience of which the Apostle desires for them when he prays (as in those wonderful words of ch. i. 17—20) "that they might know what is the "exceeding greatness of the power of God toward us "who believe *according to the working of His mighty* "*power*" (literally, "*according to the energy*, or "*in-working, of the might of His power*") "*which* "*He wrought in (with which He energized) Christ* "*when He raised Him from the dead.*" The same life which, he elsewhere states, is the grace signified by and communicated in Baptism: as in Col. ii. 12, "Buried with Him (Christ) in baptism, *wherein also* "*ye are risen with Him*, through the faith of the "operation of God who hath raised Him from the "dead;" or, "through the faith of the energy of "God in raising Him." And again, Rom. vi. 4, —"Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism "into death, that like as Christ was raised up from "the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we "also should walk in **NEWNESS OF LIFE.**" In a

word, the grace and gift whereby Christ is the Author to us of *Regeneration* as well as of *Justification*—of Justification by the shedding of His blood for us in His death; of *Regeneration* by the imparting to us of His Spirit, the life of His resurrection.

And this life-giving Holy Spirit in us, as in Him, is the ground and earnest of our Hope to be raised hereafter in incorruption and in glory. Not of resurrection simply: for all shall be raised. But not all in the same way or in like nature. For not of all is it written, "this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality," (1 Cor. xv. 53); as is sufficiently evident from what follows—"So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." And whence the difference? The question is answered in the same chapter, ver. 42—45, where, having stated that "there are bodies celestial and bodies terrestrial" which differ one from the other in "glory," the Apostle adds—"So also is the resurrection of the dead, It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power." (This is the *difference*; and now follows the *cause*):—"It is sown

“a *natural* body ; it is raised a *spiritual* body. There is a *natural* body and there is a *spiritual* body. (Literally, as before remarked, “a body *proper-to-the-soul** and a body *proper-to-the-spirit*.”†) And “so it is written, The first man Adam was made a *living soul*;‡ the last Adam was made a *quickening spirit*.”§ Or, as the same truth is stated Rom. viii. 11,—“If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by (*Marg.* because of) His Spirit that dwelleth in you.”

And, because quickened by the same Spirit, raised also in the same image: as we read again, Phil. iii. 21,—“who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned *like unto His glorious body*, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.” And again, Col. iii. 4, “When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear *with Him* in glory.” And again, in 1 Cor. xv. in continuation of the former quotation, ver. 47,—“The first man is of the earth, *earthy*: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the *earthy* such they also that are *earthy*: and as the *heavenly* such they also that are

* ψυχικός † πνευματικός ‡ ψυχὴν ζῶσαν § πνεῦμα ζωοποιόν.

"heavenly.* And as we have borne the image of "the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the "heavenly."

And now, in conclusion,—What shall we say to these things? to these so great present privileges and still greater promises here revealed to us? We may best draw the inference and make the application in the words of the Apostle—in the sequel of a passage but just quoted—Rom. viii. 12, 13, "Therefore, "brethren, we are debtors: not to the flesh, to live "after the flesh; for if ye live after the flesh ye shall "die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify (put "to death) the deeds of the body, ye shall live:" in sequel, observe, of ver. 11, which had said "If the "Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead "dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the "dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies." Yes: the Resurrection—apprehended in this its scriptural ground and principle—is a holy Hope. Holiness was its cause in Christ; and Holiness—the partaking of His Holiness—is the earnest of it now in us. And the denier of this truth, the unbeliever, is therefore—not only the man who says (as did some in the Apostle's days) that "there is no resurrection of the dead" or that "the resurrection is past

* The translation inserts *are*—"such (are) they:" but quere should it not be "such (shall be) they &c." i.e. in resurrection?

already," but—the man who, professing to live in the Spirit, walks after the flesh; who, born and baptized for Eternity, lives for Time; and, called with a heavenly calling, the subject of heavenly promises, "MINDS EARTHLY THINGS."

THE LIFE OF CHRIST.

XX.—THE FORTY-DAYS' INTERCOURSE WITH HIS DISCIPLES AFTER HIS RESURRECTION.

ACTS i. 3.

“To whom also He shewed Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.”

THIS being the last Sunday after Easter and the Sunday next before the commemoration of the Ascension, it seems to be the fit occasion to notice the Interval between these Events in our Lord's history—the “forty days” during which, as this passage informs us, He was seen by His disciples after He rose from the dead.

We observe, then, that there are two purposes here assigned for which this intercourse was vouchsafed by Him: First, To afford them—the Apostles who should be witnesses of His resurrection—abundant evidence of the fact; and Secondly, For the purpose of giving them the further instruction

needed by them and for which they were now more prepared.

I. First—"To whom also" (says the sacred Historian) "He shewed himself alive after his passion by "many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty "days" . . . where there are three particulars for our attention—the *persons*, the *proofs*, and the *time*.

1. The *Persons* were chiefly "the Eleven,"—"the Apostles whom He had chosen," as the preceding verse states: though not exclusively; for, on one occasion, (St. Paul tells us 1 Cor. xv. 6,) "He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once" additional to them.

But notwithstanding so large a number of witnesses, scepticism here raises an objection and asks—"Why appear only to His disciples, and not to any others?" as it is distinctly admitted that He did not in the xth ch. of this book, verses 40, 41, where the Apostle Peter says—"Him God raised up the third "day and shewed Him openly; not to all the people, "but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, "who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from "the dead;" 'Would not the evidence have been more unquestionable if He had been shewn "to all the people," independent of the advantages certain to have followed in the conviction and conversion of

multitudes ?' To which a ready and satisfactory answer presents itself,—That, conceding the increase of evidence of the Truth, here assumed, from a public manifestation,—(which, however, must have been really far less than is at first imagined, inasmuch as the crowd in general could not have possessed the means of a perfect identification in the case of One whose public life embraced only the period of three years and a-half, and whose mission caused him in that time to change place continually),—granting, I say, the result as respects increased evidence, it were a sufficient reason for withholding it, and one which also renders very doubtful the assumed success of it if afforded, that the Nation had rendered itself unworthy of it by the rejection of all that had been given during the ministry of the Saviour. That evidence was neither sparing nor partial ; not consisting merely in His own testimony to Himself, or His assertion that He was the Christ of God, like those who, He predicted, should come in their own name “ saying, I am Christ, and deceive many.” No :—“ If ” (said He) “ I bear witness of “ myself, my witness is not true. . . . The works “ which the Father hath given me to finish the same “ works that I do bear witness of me, that the “ Father hath sent me.” And again, “ If I do not “ the works of my Father, believe me not. But if

"I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works :
"that ye may know and believe that the Father is
"in me, and I in Him." (John v. 31, 36: x. 37, 38).
And what was the result ? That, as the next verse
to this last quoted says, "they sought again to take
him:" the more irresistible (as usually happens) the
evidence of that which they were unwilling to believe,
the more determined they to quench it—even by
taking His life ! And more evidence is now asked
for after they had accomplished their wish,—after
they had put Him to death ! And with what view ?
'Their conviction and conversion.' But on this
point we must be allowed to be sceptical in our
turn : and if the words of our Lord (prophetic words
as they proved) be allowed to have reason—"If they
"hear not Moses and the prophets neither will they
"be persuaded though one rose from the dead"—
much more we say, If the mighty works done in
the cities of Judah by one greater than Moses and
the prophets failed to convince and move their
people to repentance, those who, when every other
evasion failed them, could say that "He cast out
demons by Beelzebub the prince of the demons,"
would easily find means of evading the fact of His
resurrection either by denying the reality of His
death or questioning His identity when raised.

But while this is a sufficient answer to the objection,

and the only one that we need be careful to give to the Sceptic, there is another (though he may not appreciate it) which the subsequent history of God's dealing with that people would prove to be the truer one. For, though the Lord might justly have ceased to strive with the Jews after their crucifixion of Christ, and have refused to grant them further evidence of the Truth which they had thus wickedly "suppressed" or "resisted in unrighteousness"*—though scepticism's self should blush to ask for more—we do not find that He did so. On the contrary we hear the expiring Jesus interceding for them from His cross, and we cannot think ineffectually: and, in conformity with His last injunction before He ascended—"that repentance and remission of sins should be preached to all nations *beginning at Jerusalem*," we find the Apostles after His Ascension preaching the Gospel "to the Jew first" throughout this book of The Acts: nor was it until they put it from them, and "resisted the Holy Ghost" in resisting "the Gospel preached to them with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven," that the measure of their sin was full and "the wrath came upon them to the uttermost."

It was not then in judgment that the risen Saviour was "shewed, not to all the people, but,

* Rom. i. 18, Greek.

unto witnesses chosen before of God:" but for a very different reason—Because it could not have been otherwise. His humiliation, it should be remembered, was now over—that humiliation of which no small part was His being conversant with an evil world and "enduring the contradiction of sinners against Himself:" and this must not again be. Moreover, He had put off the form of mortal flesh and had put on immortality—no longer now of the earth even in so far as he had condescended to be for a time in taking mortal human nature; but spiritual, even as regarded the body, and heavenly: and therefore not to be looked on by mortal eyes except as He might vouchsafe to make Himself visible to those who were in a measure fitted and prepared by Him for such holy intercourse. Which is indeed the force of the Original in Acts x. 40, where, for "shewed him openly," we should rather read "granted Him to become visible *or* manifest:"* confirmed by the *manner* of His appearances—no longer tarrying with them as before, but coming into the midst of them suddenly and miraculously they knew not whence, and vanishing out of their sight they knew not whither; shewing that, though not yet "glorified" or "ascended to the Father," He was no more of this world.

* *Ἰδόντες αὐτὸν ἠμφωτὴν γινώσκουσιν.* *Vulg.* 'dedit eum manifestum fieri.'

So much I have felt it necessary to say as to the *Persons* to whom Jesus "shewed himself alive after His passion:" who, as already observed, were so numerous as to constitute a body of witnesses larger than has ever been required for the attestation of truths the most surely believed among men; while,—

2. Again—The "*Proofs*" afforded them were, as our Text says, "many" and "infallible:" inasmuch as they not only saw Him and conversed with Him, but they had the most unmistakeable proof of His identity given them in that "He shewed unto them His hands and His feet," saying, (when "they were terrified and affrighted and supposed that they had seen a spirit")—"Behold my hands and my feet "that it is I myself: handle me and see; for a spirit "hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have:" and to one more incredulous than the others—"Reach "hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach "hither thy hand and thrust it into my side; and be "not faithless but believing:" in addition to which, a circumstance in itself so conclusive as to be singly mentioned in ch. x. 40 of this book already referred to—they "did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead." And,—

3. Last under this head—He was "seen of them *forty days*;" that is, at various intervals and frequently during that period: a period which has an

evident relation to the event mentioned in the two next verses—"the Promise of the Father," for which He tells the assembled disciples to wait at Jerusalem; the gift of the Holy Ghost sent on the *fiftieth* day from His resurrection, "the day of Pentecost :'' that Feast which was kept in commemoration of the giving of the Law from Sinai seven complete weeks or 50 days after the Passover or commemoration of Israel's redemption ; when also "the first-fruits" of the harvest were offered: the Antitype of which is "the ministration of the Spirit," (as on the same day), by which the Law was written on the heart and the first-fruits of the Church presented to God: preparatory to which it was necessary that the Saviour, by whom that gift was obtained, should ascend to heaven, as we learn from this passage that He did ten days previously :—an interval appointed (among other reasons unknown to us) doubtless to give space for the "prayer and supplication" in which we find the church "continued" unremittingly the meanwhile ; "praying without," as it were, for the Blessing, while the High Priest had entered into the true Holy Place, and was interceding by the offering of His blood. And thus we come, from the evidence of His resurrection afforded by this intercourse, to—

II. The other purpose of our Lord in it, also here stated, namely, The instruction of His disciples :—
“ Being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the
“ things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.”

The detail of these conversations has not been given by the inspired historian ; but we must not therefore conclude that the benefit is lost to us : as, on the contrary, we have ground for believing that to the instruction then given the Church was indebted for the whole of its constitution received from the Apostles both as to Ordinances and Government, as well as for the full development of the Christian Truth itself in their preaching and teaching immediately consequent.* For, if their knowledge on these subjects were not received during this period it must have been exclusively and directly imparted by the revelations of the Pentecostal Spirit. But if we study the words in which that Holy Spirit was promised to them we shall find little warrant for ascribing to Him so independent an inspiration. He is indeed entitled “The Spirit of Truth” who should “guide into all truth,” or rather “into all **THE** truth :” but “**THE TRUTH**” is in the same places defined to be Christ Himself—the revelation of the Father in

* *Note:* It is remarkable that the same time—“forty days”—was occupied in giving instructions to Moses respecting the Tabernacle and its Services ; which analogy may further account for the period here.

the Son. So in John xv. 26,—“But when the Comforter is come whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of (the) truth which proceedeth from the Father, *He shall testify of Me.*” And again, ch. xvi. 13,—“Howbeit when He, the Spirit of (the) truth, is come, He will guide you into all (the) truth: for *he shall not speak of himself*; but whatsoever he shall hear that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. *He shall glorify Me*; for he shall receive *of Mine and shall shew it unto you.* All things that the Father hath are Mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of Mine and shall shew it unto you.” And again, (ch. xiv. 26), “He shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance *whatsoever I have said unto you.*” And when we observe how little they were able to bear in the way of instruction from Him up to the time of His crucifixion—when as yet His death and resurrection were to them unintelligible mysteries—we shall be led to infer that the things spoken by Him, which the Spirit was thus to recall and apply, were for the most part “the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God” which formed the subject of His converse with them during these forty days. As, for example, when on one occasion we read, that, “beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He

“expounded to them *in all the Scriptures* the things “concerning Himself:” (St. Luke xxiv. 27). And again, ver. 44, 45,—“He said unto them, These are “the words which I spake unto you, while I was “yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which “were written in the law of Moses, and in the “Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me. “Then opened He their understanding, that they “might understand the scriptures.” While His parting commission to the eleven, in addition to the instituting of the initiatory Sacrament of Baptism, implies that they were already aware of all that should be taught the baptized in order to the perfecting of their faith:—“All power is given unto me “in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and “teach” (more correctly with the margin, “make disciples of”) “all nations, baptizing them into the “name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the “Holy Ghost: *teaching them to observe all things “whatsoever I have commanded you:* (Matt. xxviii. 18—20).

It were instructive here to adduce the illustrations of this position supplied by the preaching of the Apostles and their ‘Acts’ as recorded in this book of Scripture before us; but this must not be now attempted: and therefore I will only add in conclusion—Let us, while dwelling on the incidents of this

period in our Lord's history, and recounting one by one the "infallible proofs" afforded that He was indeed raised from the dead, praise God with full hearts for the evidence thus vouchsafed of that Truth which is the foundation of all our hopes: the seal of our justification, and also, (as lately shewn), the source of our regeneration in this life, and the earnest of immortality and glory in that which is to come: that so, having improved the season of Easter now drawing to its close, we may be prepared to follow the disciples to Mount Olivet (as the Church a few days hence invites us to do); and, in the full faith of the Saviour's RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD, contemplate with them the mystery and realize the fact of His ASCENSION TO GLORY.

THE LIFE OF CHRIST.

XXI.—HIS ASCENSION TO HEAVEN.

PSALM xvi. 11.

“Thou wilt shew Me the path of life;
“ In Thy presence is fulness of joy;
“ At Thy right hand are pleasures for evermore.”

THE verse next preceding this—“Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption”—has already afforded subject for two Discourses of this Series; as a prophecy of two distinct and notable events in the Redeemer’s history, His Descent into Hell or Hades, and His Resurrection from the dead: and this verse is now taken as an equally clear prophecy of that which terminates it,—*His Ascension into Heaven*, which the Church celebrates this day.

And here, again, our attention must be confined to the results of this Event as affecting Himself personally, and, in Him, “the Church which is His

body:" without attempting to include its other bearings; as, for example, The Office which He discharges in the Heavens as High Priest and Mediator,—His Advocacy and Intercession,—in its manifold blessings and results: which Office, as it does not fall so properly within the line marked out by the course that has been proposed, is also a subject far too wide to be embraced in it.

I. As then regards Himself personally, the results of His Ascension were two, each of infinite moment and importance,—the one affecting His Divine and the other His Human nature: contemplating Him first as "Son of God," and secondly, as "Son of Man."

1. As to His Divine Nature, His Ascension was the re-entering on or resuming of the glory which He had with the Father before His Incarnation and from all eternity: as He states in His prayer, St. John xvii. 4, 5,—“I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Thou me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was:”—the glory of that His Essential Divinity so expressly asserted in the opening passage of that same Gospel, ch. i. 1—3: “In the beginning was THE WORD,

"and the Word was with God, and the Word was
" God. The same was in the beginning with God.
" All things were made by him ; and without him
" was not any thing made that was made."

And thus is this Event the great confirmation of that Truth to Faith : so that—as when we read that on one occasion He said to His disciples "I came forth from the Father and am come into the world ; again I leave the world and go to the Father ;" they answered him, "Lo, now speakest thou plainly and speakest no proverb ; now are we sure that thou knowest all things and needest not that any man should ask thee : by this we believe that thou camest forth from God :"—so we may say with them and more confidently, "By *this*"—by the fact of His Ascension to heaven—we believe that He came forth from the Father and came into the world, and now is "set down with the Father in His throne" and glorified with the glory of God.

I say, 'The confirmation of this Truth to *faith* : for the evidence of it to sight—the evidence that will silence unbelief—is not yet ; nor will be until His own words are fulfilled, "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven ;" (Matt. xxvi. 64) ; that declaration which drew forth (as we remember) from the High Priest, who knew its im-

port, the exclamation "He hath spoken blasphemy:" and which is still, in that its true import, accounted blasphemy by those who deny His Divinity. Such there have been from the beginning, and are now, many: and such (we are forewarned) there will be increasingly as the consummation and development of Anti-Christianity draws near of which *this* is the chief characteristic and the very definition—the denial "that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh." . . . which is the denial of "the Father and the Son," (1 John ii. 22; iv. 3): the confutation of whom will be His Second Coming—the *manifestation* of His glory, as was the First the manifestation of His humiliation: when, as it is written, "At the name "of JESUS every knee shall bow, of (those) in heaven, "and in earth, and under the earth: and every "tongue confess that Jesus Christ is LORD, to the "glory of God the Father"—"to the glory of the Father" because of the ineffable union of the Father and the Son. But the Christian—for we must not call such Christian though they call themselves so)—though he waits for that event with ardent desire, though he "looks for and hastes unto the coming of the day of God," looks not for it to satisfy himself of the Lordship of Christ nor of His Divine glory: for, *this* he confesses when he says, 'He ascended into heaven and sitteth on the right hand of God the

Father Almighty :—that seat of power, “the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,” which implies the subjection to Him of all creation ; as St. Peter says, 1st Ep. iii. 22, “Who is gone into heaven and is on “the right hand of God ; angels and authorities and “powers being made subject unto Him.” May we be kept steadfast in this faith ; that so we may not “be ashamed before Him at His coming,” but be acknowledged by Him as those who confessed His glory when it was hidden to sight, and maintained our allegiance to Him as King when the world was saying “We will not have this man to reign over us !”

2. But there is another aspect of this event in which it was also most glorious to Him, and of which perhaps *we* at present need more to be reminded—that is to say, contemplated in reference to His Humanity, as “The Word made flesh” and “The Son of Man.”

In this view, His ascension was not the resuming of former glory, but His first entrance on it. Then, as it is written, “was Jesus glorified ;” with a glory to which, indeed, the human nature became entitled by His assumption of it—by being taken into union with such an One as the Eternal Word of God, “the only begotten of the Father :” but which it possessed not so long as He was on Earth “in the form”—not

of a Son, but—"of a servant." For which reason His taking that form is stated to have been by a double humiliation, Phil. ii. 6—8, First, in that He, "who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God . . . was made "in the likeness of men : " and then, "being found in "fashion as a man, he humbled Himself and became "obedient unto death, even the "death of the "cross." But as, in the prospect of that hour, He anticipates His Resurrection in the words preceding our Text—"Therefore my heart is glad and my glory "rejoiceth ; my flesh also shall rest in hope : for "Thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades, neither wilt "Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption : " so in the Text He anticipates His Ascension,— "Thou wilt shew Me the path of life " (the region of life—Heaven—as this phrase denotes, confirmed by the sequel): "in Thy presence is the fulness of joy : at "Thy right hand are pleasures for evermore." Which anticipation sustained Him in His sufferings as Son of Man ; as the Apostle says, Heb. xii. 2, "Who, *for the joy that was set before Him,*"—(in allusion, it would seem, to this Prophecy)—"endured "the cross, despising the shame, *and is set down at "the right hand of the throne of God :*" "set down "there in the very humanity in which He rose and with which He was seen to ascend. Wonderful

thought this! *A Son of Man* not only higher than the angels—for, “He took not on Him the nature of angels but He took on Him the seed of Abraham”—but “made higher than the Heavens!” exalted even to the throne of God! Well might the Psalmist, in vision contemplating this fact, and contrasting it with His humiliation, exclaim—“What is man that Thou art mindful of him, or The Son of man that Thou so regardest Him? For Thou madest him a little while lower than the angels: Thou crownedst Him with glory and honour, Thou madest Him to have dominion over the works of thy hands: Thou hast put all things in subjection under His feet!” (Ps. viii. 4—6 with Heb. ii. 6—8).

Such was the Ascension of the Saviour as it affected Himself: Let us now proceed to inquire—

II. In the next place—What are the results of this fact to His redeemed?

That, as the Saviour ‘*died, and was buried, and rose again for us,*’ so likewise *He ascended for us*, would seem to be a truth too obvious to impress on those who profess to believe that He ascended *in our nature*: being, as is this event, the necessary sequel of the former—the triumph of redemption and the very climax of the Incarnation. And yet, judging from the comparative

estimate of it formed by the majority, we would rather suppose the truth to be that He died and was buried and rose again *for us*, but ascended *for Himself*: as though His ascension were His departure from this world after having done all that was beneficial to us; or, as though He then laid aside our nature and returned into His original pre-existent and Divine glory, having accomplished all the purposes for which ‘He was made man.’ Which also accounts for the prevailing comparative disregard—in many places the total neglect—of the observance of this Festival; though peculiarly distinguished by our Church and classed with her three greatest commemorations—The Nativity, Easter, and Whitsunday,—by the appointment of Proper Psalms as well as Lessons; of the celebration of the Holy communion; and, in that service, of a proper ‘Preface’ (as it is termed) specially acknowledging this event as a subject of thanksgiving:* as, indeed, there can be no reason assigned for the observance of those days that does not equally, or with more force, apply to this. While, were it even so—that it was His glorification only, that it concerned only Himself—this surely,

* *Note.*—It is remarkable that there is no ‘Preface’ for Good Friday—a plain intimation that the Communion should not be administered on that day; besides its being a *Fast*, and the Communion an Eucharistic *Feast*.

irrespective of any benefit which we derive from it, ought to recommend its celebration to all those "who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity;" whose highest joy ought to be in His exaltation who humbled Himself so low for them.

Not for Himself, however, but *for us* He ascended: and the question therefore recurs—What are the results, what the benefits to us from this fact?

Some ancient writer has said that 'The Mystery of this Festival—of the Ascension—is Heaven.' The Mystery of the Death of Christ, our Justification: the Mystery of His Resurrection, "Life and Immortality brought to light:" the Mystery of His Ascension, Heaven—Heaven revealed, Heaven opened. And so it is in two senses:—

1. It was 'the opening of the Kingdom of heaven to all believers in prospect; as we lately saw when speaking of the Christian's hope in death, as contrasted with that of believers in former times before the Ascension of Christ. *Then* looking only, "in the cutting off of their days, to go to the gates of Hades:" *Now* to "depart and be with Christ,"—to "follow Him whither He is gone:" their dying prayer, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit;" and so, 'resting in Him' as having 'died in Him,' waiting with Him for the day of His power—of His "manifestation" and "the manifestation of the sons of God"

with Him; when He shall *appear* in glory, together with those whose life is now *hid* with Him in God; when "He shall come in His own glory, and in His "Father's, and of the holy angels;" not laying aside His present glory on the Father's throne to take "His own" on earth as Son of Man: but when Heaven shall be opened to Earth, and Earth reconciled to Heaven; and "the glory of the celestial" and "the glory of the terrestrial" joined in one, under His reign "by whom" God hath purposed "to reconcile all things unto Himself," and, "in "the Dispensation of the fulness of times, to gather "together all things in One . . . both which are "in heaven and which are on earth; even in HIM." (Col. i. 20; Eph. i. 10).

In anticipation of which the Christian too can take up the words of the Text and say—"Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is the fulness of joy" . . .; as it is written, "Blessed are the pure in heart for *they shall see God.*" And again—"there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it" (in the city of God): "and His servants shall serve Him, and *they shall see His face.*"

2. But the Mystery of the Ascension is 'Heaven' in yet another sense—as revealed and opened, not *in prospect* only, but *at present*; in virtue of our

union with Christ, and the life which we have in Him: as the Apostle states in Ephes. ii. 4—6 (a passage recently dwelt on as shewing our present participation in His Resurrection); where, having described the natural state of man as a death in sin, he adds—"But God who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ . . . and hath raised us up together (with Him), *and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.*" Observe here—not *shall* raise us up and *shall* make us to sit together in heavenly places; but—"hath raised" and "hath made:" the veil being rent and we admitted with Christ our risen and living Head to worship within, even in the most Holy Place; and before "the throne of grace," to which "we now have access with confidence" by the Spirit which He hath given us.

In other words, it is a marvellous result of this event and our singular privilege—the "high calling of God in Christ Jesus" of the Church of this Dispensation—to realize the position in the heavens of the ascended Saviour, and the relation to God, even the Father, into which in His person He has brought our nature: the climax-result and crowning blessing of the Incarnation, as saith St. John, 1st Ep. i. 3, 4, after asserting that

Truth as what he had witnessed—"That which we
"have seen and heard declare we unto you that ye
"also may have fellowship with us: and truly *our*
"*fellowship is with the Father and His Son Jesus*
"*Christ*. And these things write we unto you *that*
"*your joy may be full*:" another allusion (shall we not
say?) to the anticipation of the Redeemer in our
Text,—"*In thy presence is the fulness of joy*"—
declaring the participation in this His joy of those
to whom it is graciously given (as just said) to
realize His position where now He is gone "to appear
in the presence of God for us."

But, Is this so? Is this our calling and privilege?
Then, With what feelings should we keep this Feast!
What manner of persons ought we to be! It has
been just said that the Ascension is the mystery of
Heaven revealed—of Heaven in hope, and Heaven in
present access to God. But if it be so, it should
also be in us the mystery of Heavenly-mindedness:
as reasons the Apostle—"If ye then be risen with
"Christ seek those things that are above, where
"Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Set your
"affections on things above, not on things on the
"earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with
"Christ in God." (Col. iii. 1—4). And again,
(Phil. iii. 20),—in contrast with those who "mind
earthly things"—"our conversation is in Heaven,

“from whence we look for the Saviour the Lord “Jesus Christ.” And so the Church, praying in the Collect for this day ‘that, like as we do believe ‘the only-begotten Son of God, our Lord Jesus ‘Christ, to have ascended into the heavens, so we ‘may also in heart and mind thither ascend and ‘with Him continually dwell.’

May this Prayer be answered in us ! May we be now so conformed to the Redeemer in His Life on earth, His Death, His Resurrection, and Ascension, that (in the words of the Apostle) we “may apprehend that for which we have been apprehended of Christ Jesus” by His vouchsafing to take our nature, and hereafter be conformed to the image of His glory at His appearing !—And,

TO HIM, WITH THE FATHER, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT, BE ASCRIBED ALL PRAISE AND MAJESTY, DOMINION AND POWER, BOTH NOW AND EVER. AMEN.

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